THE MORLANDS.

TALES

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

SIMPLE AND SURPRISING.

5 35

Ex noto fictum carmen ſequar. HOR.
My ſcenes, though feign'd, from real life I draw.

——*ex fumo dare lucem*
Cogitat, ut ſpecioſa dehinc miracula promat. HOR.
Forth from a cloud of ſmoke he breaks to light,
And pours his ſpecious miracles to ſight. FRANCIS.

By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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MORLAND.

THE FIRST TALE,

CONTINUED.

Ex noto fictum carmen ſequar. HOR.

My ſcenes, though feign'd, from real life I draw.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

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MOR-

MORLAND.

CHAP. X.

Taste.—Truth sometimes no Virtue.—A Dairy, where Morland gets farther acquainted with the Character of the Broke Family.—He has a Return of some Qualms of Pride.—A tetchy Spirit.—Advice.—The most venomous Creature in Nature.—Happy Presages.

UNDER Flora's convoy I passed through the door at which lady Broke was sitting. As we proceeded I turned to look at the cascade that completed the beauty of her ladyship's china-room. The artifice

was too viſible to pleaſe: Nature had placed the rock, but Sir Nicholas's money had forced the water over it, and in a very ſcanty ſtream. No hill towered behind it to aſſure the imagination of an elevated ſource, while an arcade at a little diſtance betrayed the aqueduct, and proved the water-fall to be a contrivance of the ſame taſte that could complicate literature and ſatin-wood, flowers, birds in ſilver-wired cages, and fiſh in glaſs globes; that could breed birds from firſt to laſt, and praiſe Collins's ode for being ſtolen from a friend's.

"How do you like it, ſir?" ſaid Flora.

The

The queſtion was a teſt of my ſincerity. How difficult is it to a ſenſible mind to ſpeak truth where it is diſagreeable! That which is ſo delightful among thoſe who know and love it, is a ſpecies of brutality where it is miſconceived; and where no injury is done to religion or virtue, there is perhaps no harm in ſoftening truth to the expectations of an innocent ſelf-love. Some have no right to the truth from us, and to ſome we have no right to give it. To withhold it where due, is baſe; but to diſmay others with it, when unimportant, is no virtue.

“Don't *you* think it pretty?” ſaid I. Flora rapturouſly avowed her admiration. “Come then,” cried I,

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" and give me a bowl of milk, my little Flora, for my walk has made me thirfty."—" Oh, if you love milk," fhe replied, " you fhall have plenty. Stay here for me, till I get the key of the dairy, I'll be back in a moment." Indeed I had hardly time to caft my eye over the irregular mafs prefented by the garden front of the caftle and hall before fhe returned, bringing a little bafket in her hand.

She conducted me by the fide of the narrow ftream through the glade, which was rendered beautiful by the velvet appearance of the turf and the fhrubs planted on the acclivities. We had not walked many minutes when fuddenly turning to the right, a range of rich

rich paſtures broke upon the view. The fields were divided by hedges of thorn, and afforded their ſummer fare to the cows and horſes attached to Broke-Hall. A door opened from the garden into the firſt field where the milch cows grazed cloſe to the dairy, which Flora now unlocked. It was a grotto, conſiſting of three chambers cut in a ſmall hill, the curve of which allowed for the admiſſion of light on three ſides. The middle chamber was ſpacious, and furniſhed with dairy china, and earthen-ware, a round marble table, and mahogany chairs. On each ſide were marble fountains, and the pavement was of black and white marble in lozenges. Hither the family and their friends often repaired in warm weather to

 enjoy

enjoy, in the cool of the grotto, luxurious repafts of fruits, and fweetmeats ate with cream, and the warm milk from the cow curdled by wine into fyllabub. The other chambers were ftored with large pans of milk fully creamed, or newly fet to cream, and with bowls of frefh-made butter. In one of the chambers were ftoves containing a flow fire, over which fome pans of the milk, where the cream was completely rifen, were fet. The heat, thus gradually communicated, and never fuffered to produce ebullition, coagulates the rich covering. Every pan is removed from the ftove as it begins to fimmer, and ranged on ftands and fhelves to cool: the cream is then taken off from the flit or impoverifhed milk, and forms

the *clotted cream* ſo general in Devonſhire, and ſo delicious with coffee, with ſweet-meats, and paſtry.

In this delightful dairy Flora regaled me with ſome delicate biſcuits, which ſhe produced from her baſket, and I pledged her in a bowl of the fineſt milk I ever drank. After thanking her for her attention, I was deſirous of gaining ſome further information reſpecting the character of Lady Broke; and I accordingly entered into converſation with her. " Your lady," ſaid I, " ſeems to be a woman of a peculiar turn of mind." — " Yes," replied Flora, " ſhe is very notorious for her taſte." " How long have you lived with her?"—" As long, almoſt,

MAHARAJA

as I can remember. Her ladyſhip had me brought up herſelf, and gave me an education fit for the place I have." "Her maid?" "No, you vulgar creature you! one of her attendants. There are three of us whoſe buſineſs it is to attend entirely upon her ladyſhip, to dreſs her, read to her, and always be within her call. Mr. Dalby calls us the three graces, but my lady gives us different names."—"Mr. Dalby, I ſuppoſe, is a very intimate friend of the family's?"—"Of my lady's moſt. Sir Nicholas and Mr. Broke don't half like him. He is a ſweet man, and a pretty poet: my lady ſays he is the pretticſt poet in all the world. By the way, ſir, you repeated thoſe verſes very prettily: I ſaw my lady

took

took an immediate liking to you. Pray where did you learn to read? I learned at Exeter, but I could not read till the year my lady took me to town, and had me taught by a clergyman, under her own direction, for you know there's a great deal of difference in reading. Some read with a drawl, ſome can't pronounce, and hardly any know any thing about emphaſis and emotion. What a difference it makes, you know, to read with emotion and without—doesn't it? As for my part, I really think Mr. Dalby flatters when he ſays I read with ſuch juſt emotion. I ſhould like to have your opinion, ſir. Emotion, you know, is the life of every thing—of ſpeaking, of muſic, of dancing, isn't it? My lady

'is lately grown a little lufty, but you can't conceive what fine emotions fhe has notwithftanding."

Flora proceeded for a confiderable time in the praifes of her lady, without taking breath, or giving me an opportunity of anfwering the queftions fhe interfperfed in her fpeech; in the courfe of which, by patient attention, I learned fome facts relative to the Broke family, and drew fome conclufions which were afterwards confirmed by experience. Lady Broke had been long vain of her perfon with undoubted pretenfions, and was now vain of her intellect, and the refinement of her feelings, without any pretenfions. Sir Nicho-

las was a man of a gloomy diſpoſition, but extremely ſolicitous to overcome, or at leaſt to conceal it; and for this purpoſe he embraced any means that offered. He reſorted chiefly to hunting and the bottle, becauſe he found them moſt ſucceſsful; but any company, and even the whimſical entertainments of his wife, were cordials, compared with the gloomy ſtate into which he fell when he was not excited by ſome ſpecies of diſſipation. Lady Broke poſſeſſed a very great aſcendency over him, and he allowed her to ſpend immenſe ſums of money in the gratification of her fancied taſte.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

They had had many children, but had reared only two, their firſt-born, a boy, who was chriſtened Nicholas after his father, and a daughter, ſeveral years younger than her brother. Young Broke, ſent to a public ſchool while yet a child, had been early initiated into vice, which, at the age of three-and-twenty, had made ſuch inroads on his conſtitution, that his perſon already bore evident marks of debility. He was impious in his converſation, and devoid of principle in his conduct. Miſs Broke had received a boarding-ſchool education, and was accordingly an accompliſhed young lady; that is to ſay, ſhe played rapidly and noiſily on the piano-forte, out of tune,

and

and out of time, and danced with more elegance than modeſty. Her brother's company and converſation had had their due effect upon her mind; and if I did not diſcover from Flora that ſhe was a libertine at ſixteen, I found that ſhe was an infidel, and the diſtance between the two characters is but a ſtep.

With reſpect to domeſtic arrangements, Sir Nicholas and Lady Broke had two diſtinct eſtabliſhments, and her ladyſhip's attendants looked down upon the baronet's people as of a lower order: theſe were the ſervants of Broke-Hall, thoſe, as Flora diſtinguiſhed, were attendants, never employed in menial offices,

but

but in affairs of tafte and refinement.

Flora recollected that fhe might be wanted before fhe exhaufted her topics; fhe then told me that my appointment was to be twenty guineas a-year, or forty if I found myfelf the common clothes; and having written my direction in her tablets, conducted me round the caftle, put me in the way I had come, and kiffing her hand, bade me good day with a fmile.

In my way through the grounds I ftopped, more than once, to admire the old building, and the richnefs and beauty of its fcite. An ex-

extended eminence afforded many beautiful points of view, and the porter's lodge, which was out of ſight of the caſtle, ſtood on a brow that commanded the city of Exeter. The whole had the appearance of one of thoſe fortreſſes of former ages, in which the barons of England prided themſelves upon their independent ſpirit, now ſoftened by the genius of peace into an elegant retirement. It was a ſituation fit for a prince of a mind that caſts more luſtre on his birth than it receives from it. I felt an uncommon veneration for the place, and lingered at the gate, ſurveying the boldneſs, the ſublimity of the landſcapes, formed by the adjacent hills and woods.

On

On the road to Holcomb my thoughts turned on my converſation with Flora. At what ſtraws will not pride catch to break its fall! Lady Broke had talked of my *ſalary*, Flora of my *appointment* and *common clothes*—not a word of *wages* or *livery:* perhaps I was not deſcending altogether to the level of a footman.

In ſpite of this conſolatory thought, I could not help regretting, now my fate was fixed, that I had not determined to change my name, when I was compelled to conſent to a degradation, in which it was involved with its poſſeſſor. I was ſorry that I had ſuffered Flora to write it down in her book; I was on the way to the vicar of Holcomb's, and would have

have entreated him to wink at my taking another. I might have separated servitude and the name of Morland, notwithstanding the letter he had written in my favour to Mr. Jones; for it did not appear that he had mentioned my name to Lady Broke, and if he had to Sir Nicholas, the baronet would have forgotten it. Alas! it was now too late; in the simplicity of my heart I had committed it to Flora; the name of Morland was imprinted on her memory, or at least on her tablet, a more certain remembrancer. The name of Morland! oh, pride! and whom was the substituted name to conceal? who was the far-famed being whose fall the appellation of *Harris* would veil, and that of *Morland* betray?

betray? What prince, what hero, or what poet would be ſurpriſed at the degradation of Morland? What relation, what gay companion of affluent hours was there to ſneer at the degradation of Morland? Was not Morland already an aſſumed name? Off, off, cried I, off imaginary trappings, a name can neither honour nor diſhonour me; and, though on the other hand, man may do honour to a name, the honeſt conſequences of neceſſity can never diſgrace it. I recovered my common ſenſe before I arrived at Mr. Whitaker's vicarage.

The vicar was at home, and anxious, if not waiting for the account I had to give. As he encouraged me to be free, I was not reſerved in my com-

communication, and he ſeemed highly pleaſed with my narrative. He ſmiled throughout, but when I came to my recitation of the ode, he could not help laughing aloud. "Well, Morland," ſaid he, "I give you joy. It is no fault of yours if good fortune ſometimes ſprings from folly: it will be wiſdom in you to accommodate yourſelf to that folly. Lady Broke's whims will ſave you the mortification of wearing a livery; and if you are prudent, you may lead an eaſy life till ſomething better turns up for you. I ſaw her ladyſhip yeſterday, and found her brain buſy on a *fête-champêtre*, which ſhe means to give ſome time next month, in honour of her daughter's birthday. Beſides uncommon decorations, there

there are to be ſongs and dances in the open air, reels and recitations, muſic and maſks: all the people at the caſtle are to be made uſe of, in ſome ſhape or other. I took the opportunity of ſpeaking highly of your talents, and humouring her foible; I informed her that your education, by ſome means or other, had been far ſuperior to your ſtation in life, that you had never yet worn a livery, and I added it was a pity you ever ſhould. Charmed with the account I gave of you, ſhe declared you ſhould never wear one in her ſervice; that you were the very perſon ſhe had been in ſearch of all her life, but had never found; and that if you anſwered the deſcription I gave, you ſhould have nothing to complain of."

I thanked

I thanked the vicar warmly for his commendation, but added, that I feared my ſituation would require both a gaiety of heart, and a degree of hypocriſy which my diſpoſition was ill calculated to ſuſtain. "That's your look-out, not mine;" ſaid Mr. Whitaker, aſſuming a ſerious countenance; "it does not become me to preach hypocriſy."

I certainly was off my guard in the obſervation I made, which might convey an implication that he approved what I thought diſhoneſt; yet nothing was farther from my meaning than to make ſuch a reflexion on the vicar, at a moment when he was teſtifying his good will towards me; but the ſimplicity of my character often

often exposed my remarks to an equivocal turn, which tetchiness might lay hold of. Unfortunately my patron was of a tetchy spirit, and he was not pleased that the worldly prudence he had recommended, should have raised the idea of hypocrisy. I saw my error, and wished to repair it; yet I feared falling from blunder to blunder, as is too often the case when one is most anxious to avoid it. I was however more fortunate than I expected.

" I express myself ill I fear, sir," said I; " I allude to the heaviness of my heart, that does not allow me to dissemble my feelings sufficiently to enter into the spirit of the part I have to play."—" Hang your heaviness of

of heart and your feelings too!" ſaid the vicar with a ſmile, and in perfect good humour: "you are in a world through which you have to make your way; and take my word for it, you will ſtick in a ſlough, or fall into a pit, if you go out of the uſual road. You are to take people as you find them, and make what you can of their peculiarities without offending. Be aſſured it will not fall to your lot to reform any of the follies of mankind, and your buſineſs is to beware how you make any of them your enemies, particularly women. An exaſperated woman is the moſt venemous animal on the face of the earth; her venom is not confined to place; it ſpreads to every quarter of the globe; it will reach you

you at the antipodes; if you die, it will poiſon your grave. Morland, you are young, beware of the reſentment of women."—"This invective againſt the ſex is not, I hope, ſir, dictated by perſonal experience." —"Not exactly," replied the vicar, "but by an experience equally convincing. I have witneſſed the damnable conſequences of inſinuations and confidential communications, thoſe impalpable eſſences of calumny, more ſubtile, more infamous, and more pernicious than the quinteſſences of *Exili* and *La Vigoureux* *. Yes,

* I have been charged by a friend with introducing into novels, topics and alluſions that ſeem out of place in ſuch light works. My anſwer is, firſt, that I conſider a novel as a vehicle

Yes, I could tell you a tale of a woman, Morland, whose envenomed breath for years blighted a young and lovely nursery, though half the world lay between them—but this is not the time, and I have business — good day to you. I

hicle of instruction, as well as of amusement; secondly, that I trust many of my readers prefer the works of truth to the works of imagination, and are consequently not unacquainted with facts in history and other branches of knowledge; thirdly, that by exciting curiosity I may lead the young and unread to better studies; nor should I be mortified to know that the reader suspended the perusal of this chapter to look into the account of *la Chambre Ardente*, which condemned *La Vigoureux* and *La Voisin* to be burnt to death, for vending secret poisons prepared and introduced into France by *Exili*, an Italian.

am glad that I have been able to render you any ſervice—I ſhall occaſionally ſee you—mind your *ps* and *qs*, and you may yet obtain greater preferment than you could have hoped through Mrs. Waller."—I ſmiled and bowed. "I am very ſerious," added he, "and I'll tell you what, my boy; you ſhall not lack preferment for want of my aſſiſtance on the occaſion. The Brokes have intereſt with the biſhop, beſides livings of which the baronet is patron. I ſay, once more, mind your *ps* and *qs*; get into my lady's graces, and I ſhall not be ſurpriſed if I have to ſend you back to Oxford to take orders."

The vicar ſaid this as if he wiſhed in earneſt what he preſaged in gaiety.

His

His voice and manner excited my gratitude, and I expreffed what I felt. He then again wifhed me good day, and I left the vicarage.

CHAP. XI.

Pride moralizing.—Morland in Spirits.—Becomes a Builder.—Meets with a Muſician, and feels his Taſte for Muſic revive.—Tom Murphy.—The beautiful Cottager.

As I walked homewards I did not fail to fix my imagination on the points of Mr. Whitaker's diſcourſe that flattered me with the hope of regaining the ſtation in which Mrs. Waller had thought proper to place me; and in ſpite of my philoſophical concluſions between Broke-Hall and Holcomb, I felt unſpeakable delight in the reflexion that I was to eſcape the livery.

Habi-

Habituated to mix thoughts of the Deity with all the occurences of life, I eaſily perſuaded myſelf to ſee here an interpoſition of Providence. In ſpite of the philoſophy of the curate of Reading, with which I had, ſomewhat reluctantly, conſented to gild the pill, my imagination had ſtrongly impreſſed on my mind, that from the moment I put the livery on, I was ſunk to riſe no more; it was the bitter alternative impoſed upon me by neceſſity. But neceſſity and deſtiny are only modes of man's ſhort-ſighted reaſoning; we are in the hands of an ever-active power who rules events, and in whoſe government impoſſibility and fate have no exiſtence. Had it been his will that I ſhould be not merely a ſervant but a ſlave, I ſhould

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ſhould have ſubmitted without murmuring; yet I could not help rejoicing to believe, that it was his will to aſſign me a poſt on earth more congenial to the knowledge I had acquired, and the feelings I had cultivated.

This hope had been ſuddenly raiſed and ſuddenly withdrawn by Mr. Jones: it could not be again excited to be cruſhed. The buſineſs was, indeed, concluded; I was abſolutely engaged, and Lady Broke had actually declared, that I ſhould not wear a livery; that ſhe conſidered me in a light different from that in which misfortune had preſented me. It is true that I compared the life I ſhould have led at Affington with

that

that which, from my own obſervation and Mr. Whitaker's remarks, I anticipated at Broke-Hall, and was ungrateful enough to Providence, to regret that, inſtead of being admitted to the natural, unſophiſticated progreſs of rational exiſtence, I was doomed to miniſter to the vagaries of vitiated fancy. My regret, however, was not deep or ſerious; pleaſure predominated in my heart. I meditated the means of accommodating my character to that of my patroneſs, for ſo I was fond to imagine Lady Broke; I painted to my imagination motley ſcenes, in which I took my part; and I kept in view the ſpires of Oxford. My ſpirits were elevated; they had not been ſo high before, ſince I quitted

the Univerſity, and I arrived at my cottage with a lighter heart than I left it.

Bridget's cloth was laid, and in a few minutes Nancy returned from the village baker's with a ſquab pye, a diſh in great eſteem with the Devonſhire people. I have no doubt that I reliſhed it the more from the ſtate of mind in which I ſat down to it, for I never afterwards liked any of the ſame kind half ſo well. After dinner Ben preſſed me again to partake of his phyſic, but I never was leſs in want of ſuch medicine. I ſat and heightened his enjoyment of it, by talking of his doctor, and joined, without drinking, in bleſſing the inhabitants of Affington-Houſe.

Having

Having rested some time, and the afternoon being very fine, I went out and took a short stroll in a different direction from my former one. In going through the church-yard the sounds of music caught my ear, and I stopped to listen. They proceeded from the parsonage-house. A player on the piano was accompanied by a player on the violin: the tones and execution of the latter were very fine; but I soon discovered that the former was a learner, the piece being frequently suspended, and bars repeated for instruction. I felt a transient desire to be at the piano, but without loitering continued my walk.

I sauntered but a little way, when coming to the brow of a hill that

MAHARAJA S... ...'S SA...

commanded a beautiful profpect, I threw myfelf down upon the grafs, and, gazing for fome time at the country before me, fell imperceptibly into a reverie, in which, having laid a folid foundation with the materials of the morning, I gradually built myfelf a caftle in the air; but it was a modeft one, and had none of thofe lofty turrets with which I afterwards adorned others equally aërial: a neat parfonage-houfe, a good garden, and the love of my parifhioners—it went no higher—and whether as vicar or curate formed no part of the building. This was of little moment, for the fabric was no fooner completed than it vanifhed, and left me on the turf more fenfible of fatigue than I expected to be.

I re-

I returned to the cottage. Ben Collins was ſitting in his ruſtic porch. I took the oppoſite bench, and was chatting with the old man when a tall, thin, emaciated youth with a fiddle-caſe under his arm, and a green bag in his hand, approached the cottage in his way to Exeter. He was in the highway, and as he came oppoſite the porch he looked at me and touched his hat—I had on my mourning ſuit. I immediately ſuſpected that he was the muſician I had heard at the parſonage, and I entered into converſation with him. He was pleaſed at my praiſe of his execution and finding by my remarks that I was not unſkilled in muſic, readily came into the cottage and played for me. I was charmed:

he had not only execution, but taſte, and a degree of ſcience in muſic that ſeemed beyond his years. It appeared that he came to Affington thrice a week to teach the vicar's daughters. The green bag contained a lute, which he had brought for the younger of them, but he had choſen one too expenſive and was carrying it back. He allowed me to examine it: the tone of it was fine. I followed the impulſe of my ear and without much difficulty picked out one of my own melodies upon it. The touch of the inſtrument produced a deſire to finger it with eaſe, which I was certain a little practice would enable me to do, and I inquired if I could hire one at Exeter. The young muſician in-

formed

formed me that I could; at the ſame time offering to go with me to the ſhop where he dealt to aſſiſt me in the choice. I thanked him, and we appointed to meet next morning at ten o' clock on the green where the regiment, quartered in the town, paraded.

I was punctual to my appointment; the ſoldiers were out, the band playing, and the parade crowded with perſons of all deſcriptions. I looked every where for my muſician, but without ſucceſs; and then went and waited for him near the band, where it was natural to ſuppoſe that he would look for me. The muſic ceaſing I was ſurpriſed at receiving a bow from one of the clari-

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clarionets, in whom it took me ſome minutes to recognize the perſon I came to meet. I returned his ſalute, and waited till he was at liberty. While I ſtood in the crowd, I ſaw young Jones walking with ſome of the officers before the ranks.

When the parade was over the young muſician joined me in his gay attire, and we went into the town together. He led me through the back ſtreets, in one of which he ſtopped at a houſe, and begged me to wait for him till he changed his clothes. This was done in a few minutes, and we proceeded to the muſic-ſhop, where, on depoſiting the full value of the inſtrument, I hired the very lute that had pleaſed me

me the evening before, at two ſhillings a week. I purchaſed a book of inſtructions, and engaged the young muſician, whoſe name was Murphy, to give me ſome leſſons, at the low rate of half a crown, which was what he received from the ladies at Affington.

I was very aſſiduous at my lute; in the firſt week I aſtoniſhed my teacher with my progreſs, and in the ſecond I played better than himſelf, for the lute was not his inſtrument. On the violin, indeed, few could excel him; and I expreſſed my wonder that he ſhould be piping over a drum-head inſtead of leading concerts. This produced the following account of himſelf, which I ſhall not

not give in his own words, as he was illiterate and vulgar, nearly in as great a degree as he was proficient in the melody and harmony of ſounds.

He was the ſon of a man of the name of Murphy, who kept an alehouſe at Andover. The father was himſelf a kind of fiddler, whoſe tunes ſeduced many a cuſtomer from other little public houſes. Murphy, taught by experience the value of fiddling, reſolved that his ſon Tom ſhould be a fiddler too, and accordingly had him taught. Long before he could read he was the charm of the Spread Eagle. He ſoon outſtripped his father, and the report of his talents ſpread beyond the alehouſe. He

He was ſent for to play country-dances in private families, where a decided preference was given to him above all the other fiddlers in the town. From this character he was moved a ſtep higher by a muſical amateur, whoſe eſtate lay in the neighbourhood of Andover. This gentleman, pleaſed with the tones the lad drew, took him to his houſe, and had him inſtructed by the muſic-maſter of the family to play in concert. Tom Murphy's talents daily opened, and his patron, reſolving to give him a finiſh, carried him to London, where he was taught to bow by one of the firſt maſters. After ſome time old Murphy began to miſs young Murphy, imputing to his abſence the difference in the

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quantity of beer he drew, and Tom was desired to come home. Tom Murphy, once the glory of the Spread-Eagle, now lost all his reputation there; he would play neither hornpipe nor country-dance, and what were sonatas and capricios to journeymen taylors and coblers? Old Murphy was dissatisfied, young Murphy was restive; feuds arose, and Tom resolved to fly the paternal roof and household gods. Replete with ideas of independence, he disdained to return to his patron; and being irritated beyond endurance, sallied forth one morning and sheltered his independent spirit under the colours of a regiment of infantry; in his own words, Tom listed for a soldier. He had the appearance of

more

more ſtrength and activity than really fell to his lot. His want of muſcular energy, and ſuperabundance of acouſtic ſenſibility, was diſcovered by the officers much about the ſame time, and Murphy was turned over to the leader of the band, who, having no uſe for his catgut, laid a contribution of wind upon his lungs, and, in the payment, gave him his choice of the means, clarionet baſſoon, or horn. Murphy choſe the firſt, conceiving that it would fall the eaſieſt on the taxed part. At the time I firſt ſaw him he had been blowing himſelf into a conſumption for ſome months, and in fact his perſon was a ſcarecrow. The officers of the regiment, however, had been very good to him, and

and allowed him to pick up money by teaching wherever he could get a ſcholar. This he was compelled to do at an under rate; thoſe who could afford to pay well being always in the hands of regular maſters.

This is the eſſence of what I gathered from Murphy's account of himſelf. I thought him defective in intellect; but he was young, and, conſidering the ſtate of his health, in a deplorable ſituation. I felt great pity for him, and perſuaded him to endeavour to obtain his diſcharge. That, he ſaid, he was very anxious to do, but he had received a bounty on enliſting, and he could not raiſe the money neceſſary to ſupply his place, of courſe to obtain his diſ-

charge,

charge, even if the colonel confented. The amount, he faid, would be about twelve guineas. I faw that he would fall a facrifice to the employment affigned him, and I refolved to make an effort to fave him; but I faid nothing to him at the time of my intention, as it required confideration.

My days had never paffed fo pleafantly as they did at Ben's cottage, during the period I was waiting my admiffion to Broke-Hall. I read, walked, improved myfelf on the lute, and enjoyed, if not friendfhip, a degree of affection from the worthy cottagers under whofe roof I lodged: I amufed my fancy with ideas of Broke-Hall, and vifions of prefer-

preferment, and I meditated on the means of ſerving poor Murphy. It was no ſmall meaſure of happineſs to one to whoſe ſhare ſo little had fallen. I made much of it.

One day, returning from a walk in which I had exceeded my uſual ſtretch, I took advantage of a boat going up the river, and requeſted the boatman to land me near Affington-Houſe. I obſerved that the boat had kept uncommonly near the bank; and I was hardly in it before it ran cloſe to a little garden, the turf of which ſloped down to the water's edge. At the top of the garden a neat thatched cottage appeared, peeping through lilacs in bloſſom and flowering ſhrubs. As the boat

ſtopped

ſtopped a young perſon came out of the cottage, and approached us. The ſimplicity of her dreſs might have created in my mind a doubt of her rank, had not the elegance of her form, and the grace of her motion demonſtrated that ſhe was of no common order. If I admired her perſon, as ſhe walked towards the boat, I was dazzled with the exquiſite beauty of her countenance, as ſhe drew near. She no ſooner, however, perceived me, than ſhe turned, and went back to the houſe. In a few minutes, her maid came down to the water ſide, and ſome things were landed and carried up to the cottage by the man, who immediately returned, put off, and in about

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an hour landed me where I desired.

The beautiful cottager kept possession of my imagination while I remained in the boat, and recurred occasionally to it for many days after. The boatmen could give me no account of her more than what I had learned from her packages, which were directed to Miss Alton, at the Hut. I had more than once passed the place without perceiving it, for near the spot where I hailed the boat, the foot-path led through a copse winding along the side of a hill for more than a mile; the paling of Miss Alton's Hut was concealed by the brush-wood that skirted her

little domain, and her habitation was ſo ſituated as not to be ſeen from the path. Curioſity and admiration led me once afterwards to explore the poſition of the hut. The extent of the paling, with which it was fenced down to the river ſide, incloſed little more than an acre of ground; I ventured to peep over in various places, and got ſeveral glimpſes of the cottage; but not one of the beautiful cottager. I inquired of Ben and Bridget in vain, for they had never heard of the name of Alton. I was obliged to reſt ſatisfied with my ignorance, for no one whom I knew was acquainted the object of my inquiry.

As my mind often recalled the tranſient view I had had of the Joneses, I remembered that Mr. Jones had deſired me to call, and let him know when I was fixed. I ſometimes thought of intereſting him for Murphy, preſuming, from his ſon's acquaintance with the officers of the regiment, that through him the colonel's conſent for a diſcharge would be eaſily obtained. At other times I imagined that if I could contrive to introduce my muſician into Lady Broke's *fête-champêtre*, it might be the means of making his fortune. Again I reflected that they were not incompatible, and my inclination to be once more in Affington-Houſe ſeconding my wiſh to ſerve

ſerve this lad, I determined to wait on Mr. Jones.

When I had taken this determination, I pondered on all I ſhould ſay, anticipated my reception, and foreſaw the happy reſult of my application. How delightful are thoſe moments that are occupied with the contemplation of promoting the welfare of others! How much ſweeter ſtill thoſe in which the contemplation is realized!

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SA...
THE TANJORE ... MAHAL.

CHAP. XII.

A Proſpect of real Happineſs ſuddenly opens upon Morland.

I HAD reckoned without my hoſt in preparing my ſpeech, and anticipating my reception. Mr. Jones went to London the week before on buſineſs; Mrs. and Miſs Jones were alſo from home, being gone to ſpend ſome days with a family near Chudleigh, but they were expected back at the end of the week. Young Jones was the only one of the family then reſident at Affington-Houſe, and he was not within. I ſolaced myſelf for my diſappoint-ment

ment by obtaining permiſſion to go through the grounds. I will not deſcribe them: the ſcite afforded ample room for the beautiful; and the genuine taſte of the deſigner had done little more than prune and train the luxuriancy of nature.

Having entered a ruſtic alcove near the bank of the river, I had ſcarcely ſat down when I heard a ruſtling among the ſhrubs behind the ſeat. I looked and ſaw young Jones coming out of a narrow ſhady path. His pace was between running and walking. His eyes wandering on the ground from place to place ſeemed in ſearch of ſomething he had loſt. On perceiving me: "Ha!

Morland," crried he, "you there? I have loſt a letter, have you picked it up?" He ſeemed to think of nothing but the letter, which he continued looking for. Having anſwered him in the negative, I joined him in his ſearch. "I certainly had it here this morning," ſaid he, "and not an hour ago, I ſat there with it in my hand." I advanced and examined the place to which he pointed. It was a ſeat formed with pieces of rough wood croſſed. The letter had gone through one of the interſtices, and being caught by a projection, did not fall to the ground, but hung out of ſight. "Here it is," cried I, delighted to have found it. "That's a good fellow!" ſaid

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he, with ftill greater delight; "I thank you a thoufand times, I would not have loft it for the world."

His anxiety for his letter being relieved, he had time to attend to my accounting for his finding me there. "There is no occafion for an apology, Morland," replied he, "I only wifh you had come before my father left us. You can't conceive how interefted we are all about you. My father has often mentioned the converfation he had with you, and the manner in which you felt your difappointment. I know he means to ferve you. He expected you here almoft every day, and finding you did not come, went over to Holcomb, the day before he fet out

on his journey, to make a fuller inquiry about your ſituation. Mr. Whitaker was not at home, and I cannot tell you how much he was diſappointed at not being able to ſatisfy himſelf, before he left Devonſhire."—"Good Heaven!" cried I, "and I have been living all the time almoſt within a ſtone's throw of your gate; daily and hourly thinking of you; daily, if not drinking your health, at leaſt adding an amen to the toaſt; living, too, under a roof of your father's."—"A roof of my father's!"—"Yes, a thatched one, indeed, but, at the ſame time, one that exalts him higher in my mind, than Affington-Houſe — the cottage of Ben Collins; where I have ſeen the old man regularly take his phyſic,

and

and heard him as regularly bleſs his doctor; a bleſſing that I followed in thought and prayer, as it aſcended, with its peculiar aroma, to the gate of heaven."—"You are an enthuſiaſt," ſaid Jones, ſmiling, "and, let me add, you are not what you have attempted to appear. Who are you, Morland? Come, we are both young, confide in me, I'll not betray you; you are a gentleman, I am ſure."—"If education make a gentleman," replied I, "perhaps I have as good a title to it as moſt others, but I anſwer no farther: there are ſome gentlemen who cannot trace their deſcent beyond their grandfather; I, alas! am one who cannot trace it even to my father—I never knew my parents.

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There is in infancy and youth a prompt attraction, which, if more frequently attended with repentance than the wary attachments of manhood, is amply repaid by the ſtrong delight of confidence, and the warm intereſt reciprocally inſpired when virtuous friendſhips are the reſult of it. Jones's countenance, as well as his expreſſions, invited me to open my heart to him. We ſat down in the alcove, and I related to him all that I knew of myſelf, from the time I could recollect, till the day I was ſent from Pinhoe to Affington. I intermixed my obſervations and ſentiments on incidental topics, and I concluded with ſaying, that there was nothing in my fate I ſo much lamented, as the excluſion of

every

every hope of forming a friendſhip, ſuch as my ſtudies and feelings had taught me to paint to my imagination, and ſuch as my heart aſſured me it was capable of.

"My dear fellow," ſaid Jones, "do not attribute the excluſion of that hope to your ſituation. Friendſhip is a plant that likes ſhade; it oftener riſes, and certainly grows ſtronger, in miſfortune than in the ſunſhine of proſperity. Few, Morland, have ſouls capable of friendſhip. You may think me happy enough to have found a friend: believe me, not one. I am, indeed, pleaſed and intimate with ſeveral of my companions; but the ſentiments they occaſionally betray, and their con-

conduct at times, keep them on the surface of my heart. One I thought I loved, nay, I did love him; but he was a villain. He was some years older than myself, and had seen more of the world. He was accomplished, he was handsome. The knowledge he possessed raised my esteem, the sentiments he uttered were such as my heart adopted, they gained my love: the union of esteem and love is friendship, and the sweet sensation resulting from it was produced by this man; but he was a hypocrite. After a year of consummate deception his character unfolded itself, the mask fell off, and I found myself in league with a devil. Astonished at the horrors that opened upon me, I threw myself

ſelf into my father's arms for ſafety, and, by that means, narrowly eſcaped a ſhare of the infamy that attached to the villain. When I ſaid I had not found a friend, you muſt underſtand me, Morland; I mean among my companions. Nature, in making me the child of the man you ſaw, had, from my birth, prepared me a friend. He has ſo mingled the inſtructions of a father with the familiarity and confidence of a playmate, that, before I was twenty, he completely eſtabliſhed between us that affection, which, diveſted of awe on the one ſide, and of authority on the other, leaves as pure a friendſhip as can be formed between man and man."

Jones ſpoke with ardour; his ſoul was in his countenance: ſuch a friendſhip, ſo expreſſed, contraſted the vacuum of my life, and brought tears into my eyes. "Do not weep, Morland," continued he, "I am afraid you have too much ſenſibility; I did not mean to make you feel the want of ſuch a parent, and, after all, perhaps, I am doomed to be the more wretched for ſuch an advantage." This required explanation, but Jones ſtopped and remained thoughtful. After ſuffering his pauſe to continue ſome moments, I interrupted it by ſaying, I hoped that that was impoſſible. "The void which that villain left in my heart," ſaid he "was certainly ſoon filled by my father's friendſhip, and by

by that of my mother and my ſiſter; yet a few months have made an alteration, and though I doat on them with undiminiſhed love, the void is again opened. My heart is charged with a burden which it cannot repoſe on them; I need advice which they cannot give; I want to reaſon on a point of which they are not judges. In ſhort, I want a friend, and have been looking in vain among my acquaintance for a man worthy of the name. There are no friends among mankind. Time itſelf ſcarcely furniſhes three or four inſtances of true friendſhip. Men are blind to their real intereſts. Friendſhip is the greateſt bleſſing upon earth, but men think and act

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in ſuch a manner as to be incapable, as to be unworthy of it."

How did I long to offer him mine! but I felt too ſenſibly the difference of our ſituations to think it acceptable: beſides, young as he was, he ſeemed extremely nice in his choice, and he delivered his ſentiments with an eloquence that ſurpriſed me. He went on: "Inequality of fortune is ſaid to preclude friendſhip; but I am not of that opinion, for it can only hold good where the inequality is attended with arrogance on the one hand, and baſe ſelfiſhneſs on the other; and it is theſe of themſelves that are incompatible with friendſhip, not inequality. A man in nar-

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row circumſtances may have a great mind, and a man at his eaſe may be devoid of arrogance. Theſe characters are perhaps better adapted to friendſhip than perſons more on a par in their fortune, who are apt to be aſſailed by a thouſand little jealouſies; whereas, the magnanimity of the unfortunate, and the unaffected humility of the fortunate, are mutual grounds of eſteem, and afford a firm baſis for friendſhip, which is to be cemented by ſimilarity of ſentiments, and the effects of an equality of education. Morland, your ſuperiority to mercenary views, which you diſcovered in your deſire to live with my father; your ſtory, your education, the ſentiments that have dropped from you ſince I found you in

this

this alcove, ſomething in your countenance, all convince me that I ſhould be a fortunate fellow, were I capable of inſpiring you with that ſpecies of friendſhip ſo little known, but which alone merits the name."

What I felt cannot be deſcribed. The happineſs my heart panted for, but deſpaired of ever obtaining, Providence unexpectedly and early granted me. Of all men I had ever ſeen before, of all I have ever ſince ſeen, Jones would have been the choſen of my ſoul, had the election been left to me; but to be choſen by him was a completion of the bleſſing in its fulleſt extent. If my ſentiments, if my countenance had been able to inſpire him with a deſire for

my friendſhip, how were his calculated to ſtrike the chords of my ſoul. His ideas on the ſubject were worthy of a Tully; they ſeemed to me even to ſurpaſs the doctrines of that orator. The lineaments of his face, too, gave aſſurance of the exalted purity of his ideas. His perſon was tall and graceful, but it was his expreſſive eye and open countenance that ſo readily infuſed into my heart the feelings of his own, and there ſtamped, without ſcrutiny, the value of his ſentiments. There was no occaſion for proteſtations, no need of oaths to bind us to each other. Confidence meets language more than half-way. We were both in want of a friend, we were both in ſearch of one, and we met at a moment when the heart

heart of either was prepared for reciprocal confidence and reliance.

I was not, however, ſo entirely abſorbed in my happineſs as to forget the poſition in which I ſtood. On the contrary, the more delight I felt, the more was I alive to the apprehenſion of that happineſs being defeated, and I ingenuouſly declared to him not only the pleaſure his regard gave me, but my perſuaſion of the neceſſity of my foregoing the familiarity that ſhould be the concomitant of the friendſhip of which he was worthy, from being ſo ſenſible of the value of it. "Recollect," ſaid I, "I came to Affington-Houſe, to offer myſelf as a ſervant."

"That

"That ſhall never be, Morland," replied he; "have patience till my father returns; it is in his power to render ſuch a humiliating reſource unneceſſary, and I am ſure he will do it. How could you ſuffer the thought of it to enter your mind? I cannot but think that the curate of Reading wanted feeling when he ſuggeſted it." I repeated to him Mr. Scot's reaſoning, and dwelt philoſophically on the arguments with which he had in ſome degree rendered it palatable. "That," ſaid he, ſmiling, "might do for a little while; but ſuch a mind as yours requires attachments, and could never find any among thoſe with whom you would neceſſarily be claſſed. What is life worth without friendſhip?"

"Indeed,"

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"Indeed," replied I, "my feelings are in perfect unifon with yours, and I fhould account this the happieft moment of my exiftence, were it not attended with a great dread, that, in yielding to my happinefs, I am by anticipation committing an act of ingratitude towards your father, whofe benevolent mind has conceived the idea of promoting my welfare."

"Good heavens!" cried Jones, "you know not my father, or fuch a thought would never have occurred to you—but you will know him, and when he knows you a little more, he will think it a bleffing that his fon has found a friend whofe fentiments are fo juft; one whom he would himfelf have pointed out to my

my choice: for he is fully ſenſible that friendſhip is rare, and that it is neither birth, wealth, nor equality that foſters it; but virtue and knowledge, with kind and amiable manners. You ſhall know him, I ſay: meanwhile—"

"One thing more," cried I, "it is neceſſary you ſhould hear; I am abſolutely engaged to Lady Broke; not indeed as a livery ſervant, but as ſome ſort of an attendant, though I am unacquainted with the nature of the duty to be required."—"We will talk about Lady Broke by and by," replied he, "but at preſent I am impatient to talk to you about myſelf. Come to my room." Saying this,

he

he held out his hand, a mutual preſſure ſealed our friendſhip, and a proſpect of real happineſs opened to my view.

CHAP. XIII.

Jones described.—Resolves to confide his Secret in Morland.

How readily in youth does the heart expand itself to the charm of confidence! how delightful are the early seeds of affection! yet at that period what is enjoyed as friendship, is seldom more than illusion: it is founded on the transient pleasures that accompany it; when the basis fails the superstructure vanishes. Even that, however, is sweet while it lasts. But when the mind has been early trained by principle, or by

misfortune, to a knowledge of the real basis of friendship, what an unspeakable blessing is it in youth! Unenslaved by the passions, it helps to moderate and to guide them, and is not only an enjoyment founded on virtue, as in maturer years, but an active auxiliary in the cause of virtue in its dangerous contests. It is not an every-day prize, but it fell to my lot.

Jones was only a year older than myself: he was not two-and-twenty. Uncommon attention had been bestowed upon his education; he had received the greater part of it from his father, in conjunction with a private tutor, and the formation of the heart had been its chief object,

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though the uſual learning had not been neglected. He had, however, travelled little from home, except under the immediate eye of his father, and the world was ſtill new to him. He was more acquainted with what mankind ought to be, than with what they were; and had a knight-errantry in his diſpoſition that led him to ſpeak and to act according to principle, in defiance of the moſt rooted prejudices of the world. His paſſions by nature were ſtrong; and, though he had ſtudied them, they retained a great degree of influence over him, particularly when he had no doubt that they were on the ſide of virtue.

Warm in his family attachment, and unaccuſtomed to lock up his mind to himſelf, Jones had lately become miſerable in the poſſeſſion of a ſecret of his own, which circumſtances and the known opinion of his beloved family compelled him to confine to his boſom. This he felt a painful burden, and the ſhock he had met in the treachery of a young man of family, for whom he had conceived a friendſhip of the nobleſt nature, ſeemed to conſign him to the ſolitary contemplation of his thoughts. It had begun to give a degree of reſtraint to his manners which had been overlooked by Mr. and Mrs. Jones, but had not eſcaped the penetration of his ſiſter, to whom he

he would have been happy to impart his ſecret, but that it was of a nature which peculiarly required his withholding it from her. In this ſtate of mind, guarding his thoughts againſt thoſe whom he loved beſt, and ſtruggling to prevent any alteration in his manners, Jones had liſtened with extraordinary intereſt to his father's account of me. To the naked facts Mr. Jones had added the reſult of his diſcernment, and the ſuggeſtions of his benevolence: he had ſpoken of me as having the learning and manners of a gentleman, had expreſſed compaſſion for the ſtate into which I had fallen, and had conſidered ſeveral ways of extricating me from it. Pity is ſaid to be the ſiſter of Love; it may then be, in ſome de-

gree, allied to friendſhip. The heart of Jones was prepared for the tranſition. He had ſeen me; he wiſhed to ſee me again; and having been deceived among perſons of his own rank, took pleaſure in painting me to his imagination exactly in that ſtate that afforded him a hope of ſuch a friend as he wanted. He had, however, reſolved to let the attachment proceed gradually, and to endeavour to excite confidence on my part, before he placed his in me. This was the ſituation of his mind when he found me in the alcove, whither he had returned to ſearch for the letter he had dropped, the contents of which, ſeconded by my narrative and opinions, acted upon his heart, and impelled

pelled him to make an earlier declaration of his ſentiments than he intended.

I accompanied him to the houſe, where, going up ſtairs, he led me to his apartments, which were over Mr. Jones's library; the inner one was his bed-room, the outer one his ſtudy. His writing table ſtood cloſe to the window. Having ſeated ourſelves he looked at me with great anxiety in his countenance, and addreſſed me in the following manner:

" Real virtue, Morland, cannot be the production of opinion; it ſprings from a more invariable ſource. I have learned to eſtimate things, not as they appear in the intereſted eyes

of men, but according to the nature ſtamped upon them by truth and reaſon. This cannot be wrong, and if it be, my father himſelf has been my inſtructor in it. No, it cannot be wrong —but then, if the opinions of ſociety happen to claſh with this rational eſtimate, we are imperiouſly called upon to forego our feelings and faculties, and to give up real virtue to imaginary honour. I am at this moment in that poſition, and I have the misfortune to know, that my ſentiments differ with my father's."

"Good heaven!" ſaid I, "where is happineſs to be found, if not at Affington! If bitterneſs is mixed in your cup, who may hope to have his unmingled? Can I complain?"

"We

"We are happy," ſaid Jones, "for we love one another, and make the eſteem of one another the chief object of life. The cauſe of my anxiety is not at home; it has not yet reached my family, but I fear it will ſoon."

"Oh! ſtop it, ſtop it," cried I eagerly; "let no evil ſpirit interpoſe to blaſt your paradiſe."

"Againſt an evil ſpirit it would have been ſecure," replied he: "no, Morland, it is an angel, it is real virtue combating falſe honour that deſtroys my peace, and which will, I foreſee, invade that of my family. Though I am happy in them, in myſelf I am agitated, I am miſerable—perhaps when I have imparted

the ſecret ſorrow with which my heart labours, I ſhall endure it with more eaſe: but it muſt be confined to ourſelves. May I, Morland," continued he, putting out his hand, which I again preſſed, "may I depend on ſecreſy, and will you adviſe and aſſiſt me?"

After the ſentiments that had fallen from Jones, I could have no apprehenſion that he would require of me any thing that I ſhould feel the leaſt reluctance in performing. I aſſured him that his confidence ſhould be ſacred; I declared that nothing on earth could make me ſo happy as to be able to diſſipate his anxiety, and reſtore peace to his mind. "I have then found a friend," exclaimed he, "and

“ and my feelings aſſure me that I ſhall not be deceived again: I will fully unboſom myſelf.

“ About a mile nearer Exeter, on the other ſide of the high road, you muſt have obſerved a handſome houſe built of ſtone. It is called Ex-Mount, from being placed on a hill overlooking the Ex, and is the family ſeat of the Nevills. Mr. Nevill came into poſſeſſion of it before I was born. Between his family and ours an intimacy has long ſubſiſted, and indeed has been in a manner a friendſhip by deſcent. Mr. and Mrs. Nevill are worthy and amiable in the higheſt degree. They have had a great many children, of whom only two ſons and three

daughters have ſurvived. The eldeſt of their ſons choſe a military life; he went early into the army, and is now lieutenant-colonel of a regiment which has been ſome years in India; the younger, Tom, is yet a boy. Sophia, the eldeſt of the girls, is twenty; Clara, the next, is juſt ſeventeen; and Anne, the youngeſt, is turned of fifteen. The happieſt moments of my infancy were ſpent with my ſiſter and the Nevills: time improved our happineſs in the change of our amuſements, and dancing, muſic, reading, and jaunts of pleaſure ſucceeded our childiſh ſports. I delighted in all the family; but the ſimilarity of our ages naturally attached me moſt to Sophia. I knew not what love was—I felt that Sophia was very dear

dear to me, and I ſaw that I was equally dear to her; but, though I am now fully ſenſible that ſhe had at that early period inſpired me with a paſſion, I was ignorant of the nature of my attachment: I ſhould have thought any perſon mad who ſhould have told me that I preferred her to my ſiſter.

"About three years ago, my father, judging a knowledge of the country we are born in a neceſſary part of education to thoſe who can afford it, propoſed to my mother to travel through England with my ſiſter and me, and as the propoſal was of a very pleaſant nature, it was ſoon reſolved upon. My mother and ſiſter petitioned for the company of Miſs

Nevill

Nevill in our travels; but Mr. and Mrs. Nevill, after ſome conſideration, formed excuſes which my father did not think proper to combat. I felt more pain in leaving Sophia behind than I had ever experienced in my life, and it encreaſed when I ſaw at parting that ſhe could not reſtrain her tears. At that moment I became ſenſible of my paſſion, and ſhould have declared what I felt, had I not been prevented, by the appearance of her mother, with my ſiſter and the young Nevills, at the door opening into the garden. At firſt I thought of diſcloſing my mind to my father; but from this I was deterred by recollecting that I was little more than eighteen, that every thing was prepared for our departure

ture, and that I had yet many ſtudies to purſue.

"Though Sophia's image dwelt upon my mind, the new objects that daily preſented themſelves alſo occupied my thoughts, and with my father's converſation, and my attention to my mother and ſiſter, left me no leiſure to be a pining lover; and after a ſhort time I began to doubt whether the emotion I felt at parting with Miſs Nevill was more lively than I ſhould have experienced had ſhe been my ſiſter. As our travels were not merely excurſions of pleaſure, we ſtopped a conſiderable time at the moſt intereſting places in the country: being therefore likely to be long abſent from Affington,

Affington, a correfpondence had been fettled with the Nevills to be occafionally fupported by each of us. Sophia's letters to my fifter were delightful to me, and from time to time renewed the ardour of my feelings, which were again brought to their level by my purfuits and frefh company.

"We fpent the winter in London, where I became intimate with the villain I alluded to. He had been introduced to us in the autumn, at a gentleman's houfe in Bedfordfhire. His name is Montague; his knowledge is extenfive, his fentiments apparently noble, his manners and eloquence of the moft seductive nature. Poffeffed of the rareft accomplifhments, he

he ſeems to be the only perſon that does not diſcern them, and he has the art of veiling his ſuperiority under ſuch deference to others, that men of parts feel no jealouſy in his company, and blockheads believe him their inferior. His perſonal advantages too, are of the firſt rate: he is handſome and well made, ſtrong and active. I was ſtruck with his countenance the firſt moment I ſaw him; and his flattering attentions afterwards won my affection. He was about five-and-twenty when I became acquainted with him; nearly ſeven years older than myſelf, but I forgot the difference of age in his ſociety, and cultivated his friendſhip with an aſſiduity only equalled by his own in cultivating mine. The winter-months

paſſed away agreeably and rapidly, and I looked with regret to the advance of the ſpring, which was to ſeparate me from Montague. I left him in town in the month of April, when our family party ſet out to purſue the deſign of travelling through England. He promiſed to meet me in ſome part of the country before we finiſhed our travels, and afterwards to pay me a viſit at Affington.

" In the courſe of the ſummer we traverſed the northern and midland counties, and having viſited all that was curious, returned to Devonſhire in the autumn. It is neceſſary to tell you, however, that our correſpondence with the Nevills, which, from

from our going to town, had been chiefly ſupported by Miſs Nevill and my ſiſter, ſlackened during the winter, and entirely dropped in the courſe of the ſummer. Some time ſlipped away without our obſerving it, and ſome time after it was obſerved before Louiſa—that is my ſiſter's name—before Louiſa wrote to inquire into the cauſe of Sophia's ſilence, appointing Cheſter for our addreſs. Owing to ſome unforeſeen occurrences we did not arrive at that city, for a conſiderable time after, and when we did there was no letter there for us. This was unaccountable, the diſappointment was felt by the whole party, and to me it was torture. I now again became ſenſible of the exceſs of my attachment: my

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

my imagination invented a thousand caufes for this interruption of the correfpondence, but ficknefs and death ftood foremoft. Thefe were my firft fenfations of real horror. I concealed their excefs, however, as well as I could, by combining them with Louifa's feelings, to which I had given the alarm by the expreffion of my fears. My father chid us for anticipating the worft events, when fo many others might be the caufe of our difappointment, and, making it a point with us that we fhould learn to moderate our emotions, undertook to write immediately himfelf to Mr. Nevill. We were then travelling fouth, and he mentioned Worcefter for the place to receive his anfwer.

" Not

"Not to make my father unhappy, I did every thing to diffipate my anxiety, and difguife my apprehenfions. It was clear to me, however, that he was not perfectly eafy himfelf: far from enticing us, as was his cuftom, to linger in the gratification of curiofity, he often haftened us from places with faying, "come, remember we muft be at Worcefter by fuch a day." We arrived in that city full a day before it was poffible to have a reply from Mr. Nevill. I went, notwithftanding, to the poft-office. The weftern mail had arrived in the morning, but, of courfe, had brought no letter for us. I left my name, and requefted that any fo directed might be immediately fent to the inn where we had put up.

Not-

Notwithftanding this precaution I was at the office next morning before the mail, and after waiting till it arrived, and the letters were forted, I had the mortification to receive the fame anfwer as on the day before, that there was not one for us. I was now convinced that Sophia was either dead or dying, for I was fure that nothing lefs would have prevented Mr. Nevill from anfwering my father immediately. My mind was extremely agitated: I went out of the town to be alone, I yielded to my emotion, I fhed a flood of tears. This relieved me in fome degree, and I again examined the nature of my feelings towards Mifs Nevill. I almoft again perfuaded myfelf that they were of a fra-

fraternal nature, for I believed that the loſs of Louiſa would have made me equally miſerable.

“ Having taken time to compoſe myſelf, I returned to the inn. My mother and Louiſa broke out in expreſſions of anxious ſurpriſe, and the look of it was at firſt viſible in my father's face, but a few moments diſpelled it; “ for,” ſaid he, “ the probability is, that Nevill was out of the way, and did not receive it in time to anſwer it by this day's poſt.” In ſpite of this obſervation, the reſt of the day paſſed heavily, and to me the night yielded no repoſe. The next morning I was long abroad before the arrival of the mail, and you will eaſily gueſs where

where I loitered. It was no longer in vain; I received the expected letter, and flew with it to the inn: but if the filence of the Nevills had furprifed us, how much more were we furprifed by the letter that put an end to our doubts!"

Here Jones took a bundle of letters from his defk, and, drawing out the one he was talking of, handed it to me, faying, "I preferved it; there it is." I opened, and found it at follows:

"Dear Jones,

"I am extremely vexed to find that our letters have never reached you; we have been as much furprifed as you at the long inter-

miſſion of our correſpondence. I have written once to you, and Sophy twice to Louiſa, ſince you left London. It is in vain now to attempt accounting for the miſcarriage of the letters, but we all regret the loſs of pleaſure that has been the conſequence of it. John's friend, Harry Montague, has ſuffered much anxiety from receiving no anſwer to the letter he wrote to him at the ſame time that Sophy wrote to Louiſa, directed, as appointed, to Cheſter. That mail muſt ſurely have been robbed. It was a long, charming letter, which he read to us at breakfaſt, the morning before he ſent it off. He complained of a former letter being unanſwered, in which he requeſted John to appoint a place

for their meeting: he mentioned his plans, the occaſion of his journey to Devonſhire, drew ſome characters he had met with in the way, and wrote altogether with a ſpirit and vivacity that was delightful. I am ſorry the letter is loſt, particularly as he is not in the habit of keeping copies.

" Montague has been in Devonſhire all the ſummer, and has given us a great deal of his company. He was introduced to us by our friend Harriſon, though, indeed, he would have wanted no introduction after the repeated panegyrics from you and John laſt winter; and of this he ſeemed conſcious, as he immediately mentioned you all. I cannot tell you how much he has

ingra-

ingratiated himſelf with us. The girls all round the country are pulling caps for him. His attentions, however, to Sophia, have been too marked to eſcape notice. They compelled me to caution my girl againſt affording the apt tongue of envy occaſion for talk. From what ſhe told me in return, I have every reaſon to expect a propoſal from Montague, and as I am in love with the fellow myſelf, and his fortune and connexions are adequate to my wiſhes, I have thrown no check in the way of his courtſhip. I am confident he is a man of honour, and I ſhall be happy to call him my ſon. Sophy is now turned ſeventeen, and he is about five and twenty: I think they are the handſomeſt couple I ever ſaw; but this may be the partiality of a

father; and, indeed, I find I have got into that ſtrain, ſo I will change it before I make myſelf ridiculous, though that would not be eaſy with you, my dear Jones, who, I know, have ſimilar feelings.

"The intermiſſion of our correſpondence will have one pleaſing conſequence; we ſhall have more to hear from you when we meet, which I hope will be long before the winter ſets in. You muſt be back in time to enjoy ſome of the Autumn beauties of Affington. Write to me ſoon, and let me hear about what time you think of being at home. I ſhould have written yeſterday, but ſome buſineſs intervening, I aſſigned the pleaſure to Sophy and to Montague, whoſe letters, I hope, will

reach

reach Louiſa and John, at Worceſter, by the day appointed in yours.

"I did not think I ſhould myſelf have been able to anſwer you ſo ſoon, but the buſineſs I allude to having brought me to Exeter, and being unexpectedly poſtponed till to-morrow, I determined to write to you before I return home to dinner. Truſting that you will have received the letters written yeſterday at Ex-Mount, four and twenty hours before this, I ſhall only add a repetition of my affection for you and yours.

"I am, dear Jones,

"Your ſincere friend,

"Rob. Nevill."

Exeter, Aug. 20th.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S
F-3

"Our

" Our apprehenſions," ſaid Jones, renewing his narrative as he folded up the letter, " were now removed; yet the removal was not followed by any expreſſion of pleaſure from the communication that effected it. My father expreſſed ſurpriſe, my mother coolly wiſhed Miſs Nevill might be happy, and Louiſa, fixing her eyes on me, remained ſilent; while I, pale, and ready to ſink upon the floor, felt the conviction of my paſſion for Sophia ſtrike on my heart like a thunder-bolt. I am confident, though from circumſtances it has never been expreſſed by them, that my father and mother had ſecretly taken pleaſure in foreſeeing the probability of a union between Sophia and me; and that my ſiſter ſuſpected the na-

ture

ture of my attachment. The manner in which they received Mr. Nevill's communication is a convincing proof. Nor was my prepoſſeſſion unobſerved or miſunderſtood by them, however they might deem it neceſſary, on finding ſo complete a bar againſt their hope, to bury it in oblivion. No notice was taken of the ſtate into which I was thrown by the peruſal of the letter, and time was given me to recover myſelf before the ſubject was farther purſued.

" As the violence of my emotion ſubſided, the remembrance of Montague's friendſhip took poſſeſſion of my mind, and I reſolved, if poſſible, to ſtem the current of my paſſion

with the reflection of his happineſs. I could neither blame him nor Sophia. He had, indeed, frequently heard me talk of her, and had bantered me on an ardour, which, not knowing to be love, I had conſtantly attributed to friendſhip: to her I had made no declaration, and to ſee a preference in her emotion at our parting was the flattering ſuggeſtion of a young and inexperienced heart. Montague was the handſomeſt, the moſt accompliſhed, the moſt amiable of men: Sophia Nevill was the moſt beautiful and amiable of women, poſſeſſing an underſtanding far ſuperior to her years. They ſeemed formed for each other. It was thus I argued myſelf into a reluctant ſubmiſſion to my fate, and ſtrengthened

my

my reſolution to place my happi-neſs on that of two perſons ſo dear to me.

" I had written to Montague from the north of England, urging him to meet us in our route to the ſouth-ward; but to my ſurpriſe and vexa-tion I received no anſwer to my let-ter. It now appeared by Mr. Ne-vill's that he had written, but that his anſwer had miſcarried. It was ſomething extraordinary that ſo many letters had failed; but our minds were not prepared for ſuſpi-cion, and, in lamenting our loſſes, we imputed them to accident or public robbery. We were, however, more than uſually ſtruck with the failure of thoſe mentioned by Mr.

Nevill, which ſhould have preceded his. My father and I together inquired for them at the poſt-office, in vain; they never appeared. His had come ſafe, why not the others? My father expreſſed unuſual ſurpriſe, and wrote to a friend in London, requeſting him to wait upon the ſecretary of the poſt-office, and endeavour, with his aſſiſtance, to trace the cauſe of the miſcarriage. He alſo anſwered Mr. Nevill's letter, deſiring him to make ſtrict inquiries, at the office in Exeter: he told him juſtly, that whatever increaſed his happineſs, muſt add to that of our family, and mentioned the probability of our being at Affington early in September, as we were no ſtrangers to the counties of Glouceſter

and

and Somerſet, which lay between us and Devonſhire. Before we left Worceſterſhire my father manifeſted an inclination to extend our travels to Wales; but the ſeaſon was too far advanced, and the project was deferred to a future period: beſides, we had been now a year and a half away, and we all longed to be again at Affington, where we arrived in the firſt week of September.

"The Nevills flew to meet us. If I thought Sophia beautiful when I left her, I now thought her divine. She was in her eighteenth year, and had attained the fulneſs and perfection of that bloom which had but juſt began to ſhew itſelf at ſixteen. The mutual joy of the families at

meeting fully occupied our attention, nor was Montague mentioned for ſome time. Not that he was abſent from my mind, but that I was afraid to utter his name, and felt, on again beholding Sophia, that I could not relinquiſh her even to him. At laſt my father inquired for him. On the mention of his name Sophia's eyes and mine met. I know not clearly what mine expreſſed; perhaps a mixture of love and reproach: in hers I read a kind of triumph blended with a different emotion, which I could not develope, but it ſeemed to me a confuſed union of defiance and humility: her full look and ſmile gave way almoſt immediately to a contracted brow and ſerious countenance, and theſe again were

were prefently loft in a flight blufh and downcaft eye. Mr. Nevill faid that Montague had received a preffing invitation to meet a friend in Dorfetfhire, on the firft of September to fhoot, which, being a ftaunch fportfman, he could not refift, and had accordingly left Devonfhire two days previous to the great day. Much as I loved Montague, much as I had delighted in the thoughts of his vifiting Affington, I felt myfelf, as if it were, reprieved from death by the information of his abfence. Although for an hour or two after we met, Sophia appeared in fpirits, it was not long before I difcovered that they were not natural, and that fhe could not fupport them. She funk into thoughtfulnefs, fometimes

bordering upon melancholy. My imagination gave Montague the credit of thoſe reveries, and the idea rendered me completely wretched.

" The next morning I propoſed to my ſiſter to walk over to Ex-Mount, but as ſhe complained of fatigue and appeared indiſpoſed, my mother adviſed her to ſtay at home, and I went alone. I raiſed the latch of the gate, as was my cuſtom, without ringing; and went, without any notice, to the parlour, whither I was followed by a ſervant who ſaw me come in, and who informed me that the family were gone to Exeter in the coach. I aſked if they were *all* gone, and was anſwered in the affirmative. Still I remained, and being

being accuſtomed to it, the ſervant, on ſeeing me ſit down, withdrew and ſhut the door.

"I looked round to find ſome object belonging to Sophia that I might ſigh over it. I ſaw nothing of hers in the room but her piano-forte, and I tried to open it that I might kiſs the touch of her fingers on the keys. This, Morland, this is love: to you, perhaps it appears extravagance, or the dream of poetry, but if ever you love you will find it to be nature. Yes, I could have kiſſed the keys again and again, and hung and wept over them till the family returned; but the inſtrument was locked. Thus diſappointed, I thought of Sophia's

phia's little ſtudy: I remembered that I had always been free to run about the houſe, and that I had more particularly made uſe of my freedom to go there, whether ſhe were in it or not; that I had often, when ſhe was out, ſat in her chair, admiring the drawings ſhe had left on the table— I thought I might now find ſome of theſe left out, but at all events I ſhould ſee her room, her books, her chairs, her table, her deſk.

"I had no ſooner determined to go than I felt a ſudden conſciouſneſs of a want of right. Circumſtances were now altered; we were both older, and Sophia was deſtined for another. Once more, thought I,

will

will be no unpardonable liberty—I went out of the parlour—ſtill my conſciouſneſs attended me, and inſtead of ſkipping boldly over the ſteps, I crept up ſtairs like a thief, anxious to ſteal my gratification, undetected by the ſervants. I trod as lightly as I could, looking back as I proceeded. A tremor ſeized me as I went through the paſſage that led to the door. I opened it—Sophia! and in tears! 'Heavens!' cried I, 'what can this mean?'

"Yes, Morland, angelic in her tears, the lovely girl was ſitting at her table, her head ſupported by her hand, and her handkerchief placed to receive the ſtream that flowed from her eyes—never, never can I forget that moment. She ſtarted from

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARAS...

from her ſeat, applied her handkerchief to her face, and, as ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, ſaid; 'I own I am entirely unprepared for this viſit, Mr. Jones, and you muſt allow that your appearance is rather abrupt.'—'Good God!' exclaimed I, 'What is the matter, Sophia? What have I done to cauſe ſuch an alteration in your ſentiments towards me, that my coming to your ſtudy with my uſual freedom ſhould offend you?' —'Nay,' replied ſhe, ſtruck with the juſtice of my queſtion, 'I am not offended.'—'You are hurt then, Sophia,' ſaid I, 'that I found you in tears. Why are they ſhed? Do not refuſe to tell me the cauſe: am I no longer to be your friend?' She looked at me, contracting her eye, and

and echoed the word, 'friend.' 'Are we not friends, then?' ſaid I. She recollected herſelf, and putting out her hand, which I preſſed to my lips, replied; 'Yes, that we are, Jones, and, I truſt, ever will be. You have caught me unawares in a ſituation I did not mean to expoſe, and I expreſs myſelf wildly. I could account for my tears, but it is not proper that I ſhould at preſent; and if you are my friend, you will promiſe me not to divulge what accident has betrayed to you: on this condition we will be *friends* for ever.' She laid a ſtrong emphaſis on the word *friends*: it included in my idea a reference to a favoured lover, who had contracted the limits of our attachment: but the

the wonted familiarity with which ſhe expreſſed my name was delightful to my ear, and I promiſed the ſecrecy ſhe required. 'Secrecy, you know,' ſaid ſhe, 'is the ſoul of friendſhip.' 'And what part of it,' replied I, 'is confidence? Do you imagine, Sophia, that I can be eaſy, while convinced that you are unhappy, without knowing the cauſe, and endeavouring to remove it?' —'There is no permanent cauſe,' ſhe replied, 'you would laugh if you knew it; yet, ſuch as it is, I ſhall judge of your regard by your deſiſting to inquire about it.'

She now tried to change the ſubject, and as I had conſtantly called her Sophia, ſhe caught at my laſt

ex-

expreſſion, which was—'Well, be it ſo, Sophia,'—'You are very fond of my name,' ſaid ſhe, 'apropos how is Miſs Sophia Nugent?'—'Why,' replied I, 'do you put that queſtion?' 'O!' exclaimed ſhe, affecting ſpirits, 'you think we country-folks know nothing of what happens in the metropolis.' I ſolemnly proteſted that I did not know what ſhe meant. 'Nay, Jones,' ſaid ſhe, 'it is unworthy of you to aſſeverate ſo ſtrongly. It is nothing to me; I only meant to rally you on your paſſion: and I did not imagine that the affair was intended to be kept ſecret in Devonſhire, when it was public elſewhere, and your choice generally approved.' I again aſſured her on my honour that I had

never

never heard a word of it till that moment. 'Nor ever,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſpoke or wrote your ſentiments of Miſs Nugent to any confidential friend?'—'*Confidential friend!* Sophia,' replied I, finding that ſhe alluded to Montague, 'whoſe confidential friend do you mean? mine or yours?'—'True!' ſaid ſhe, faintly, and turning very pale, 'that's an awkward circumſtance.'

"She leaned her face on her hand, ſaid ſhe felt herſelf ill, and begged me to leave her, and ſend her maid to her. I roſe to go, but ſtopped to tell her that I had a thouſand things to ſay, and feared I ſhould not ſoon have ſuch an opportunity again. Her face being cover-

covered by her hand, I did not obſerve that ſhe had fainted while I was ſpeaking, till I caught her in my arms as ſhe fell from her chair."

CHAP. XIV.

Jones continues his Narrative.

At the lively remembrance of the incident he was relating, Jones was greatly affected. He ſtopped a few minutes to compoſe himſelf, and then proceeded thus:

"Laying her gently on the floor, I ran to the bell and rang it, then returned and knelt by her in the greateſt agitation. Her maid came up immediately, and ſeeing how I ſuffered, begged me not to be ſo uneaſy, ſaying that her miſtreſs would ſoon

ſoon come to herſelf, and that ſhe had been lately ſubject to fainting-fits, which were ſoon over. While ſhe ſpoke ſhe rubbed Sophia's temples with hartſhorn, now and then holding the vial to her noſe. In a few minutes ſhe opened her eyes and ſat up, but it was only to ſhed freſh tears. Fearing they were now partly occaſioned by my preſence, I aſked her if I ſhould leave her. She nodded, and waved her hand towards the door. 'But how can I leave you in this ſtate, Sophia?' cried I, in agony. She made no reply, but by an increaſed flow of tears. 'If you will go into the parlour, Mr. Jones,' ſaid her maid, 'my miſtreſs will ſoon come down to you, or I will come and let you know how ſhe is.' Conceiving

from this that ſome point of delicacy required my abſence, I warmly kiſſed my hand to Sophia, and with tears in my eyes, left the room.

" Excuſe, my dear Morland," continued Jones, " the minuteneſs with which I dwell on theſe incidents; the images of them are ſtrongly impreſſed upon my mind, and I feel a great, though melancholy, gratification in deſcribing them. After I had paced the parlour from one ſide to the other for more than half an hour, the door opened, and Sophia entered, perfectly recovered, ſmiling, and more beautiful than ever.

' Jones,' ſaid ſhe, as ſhe advanced, ' I am ſorry you have had any pain on

on my account; but the fact is, that these unaccountable fainting-fits, and this involuntary shedding of tears have, as Mary told you, attacked me occasionally for some time past, but they have never yet happened before my father or mother, and as I know that it would make them very unhappy, I have engaged Mary, who is as faithfully attached to me as ever, not to speak of them; and I entreat you, as you value my friendship, not to give the slightest hint, either here or at home, of what you have seen.' I assured her that I would obey her, upon condition that she would consult Mr. Rundle, our apothecary, if her malady were really of a constitutional nature, and that she would convince me that she was serious in her profession of

friendſhip, by repoſing in me if any part of it aroſe from mental cauſes. 'From mental cauſes!' ſaid ſhe, 'what do you mean?'—'I hardly know what I mean,' replied I, 'but that I am at a loſs to conceive that thoughtfulneſs and tears ſhould be the conſequence of perſonal ailment without any other illneſs; and, to ſay what I think, you appear to me unhappy, Sophia.'—'I know not,' replied ſhe, 'why you ſhould think ſo.'—'Nor I, except from your thoughtfulneſs yeſterday, and your tears to-day, for I underſtood that—' here I faltered, and added, 'that you were the reverſe.'—'Come, come,' cried ſhe, 'you are low yourſelf; let us talk of Sophia Nugent. Do you deny that you ever loved her?'—'That queſtion,

Sophia,'

Sophia,' replied I, 'is to me unintelligible: let us talk of what is better underſtood by us both; let us talk of Harry Montague.' 'Well,' cried ſhe, gaily, 'let us talk of Harry Montague; let me hear a repetition of the panegyrics you laviſhed upon him laſt winter in your letters to my father.'—'After what I have heard, Sophia,' ſaid I, 'I have no doubt that the repetition would pleaſe you, but you muſt excuſe me; I feel I am unequal now to ſuch an exertion.'—'Exertion!' exclaimed ſhe with ſurpriſe, 'nay, it was your own deſire.' — 'True,' replied I, 'but I only wiſhed to hear from your own lips that you had beſtowed your heart upon him.'— 'Oh!' ſaid ſhe, with a feigned ſmile,

'that is aſking too much: beſides I would rather refer you to your friend himſelf for an anſwer: if he ſays yes, I will not ſay no!'—'Does Sophia Nevill,' ſaid I, 'ſpeak to her friend in enigmas?'—'Do not be ſerious,' replied ſhe; 'they will ſoon be reſolved: your friend will certainly be here in the courſe of next week, or early in the week following, and there will be an end to all myſtery, if there is any. Now, tell me about my nameſake; where did you firſt ſee her? when did you firſt like her? and how did you declare your paſſion to her? by a billet-doux or on your knee?' Shall I refer you to the lady herſelf, Sophia?' ſaid I: 'no, I have already anſwered you, and at a moment that precluded trifling.'—'Do

you

you mean to perſuade me then, Jones,' ſaid ſhe, 'that there is no ſuch being?' 'Far, from it,' replied I, 'Miſs Nugent is a very fine girl; as ſuch I admired her, walked with her, danced with her, rode with her; but ſhe was ſurrounded with admirers, and coquetted with them all, though engaged to be married. Under ſuch circumſtances her beauty would never have made its way to my heart, had ſhe been the only Sophia on earth. But I ſee plainly that Montague has been trifling with my name: it was not friendly.' —'No, no, no,' cried ſhe, interrupting me eagerly, 'he has the warmeſt friendſhip for you, and never ſpeaks of you but in the higheſt terms of praiſe and affection. He

 will

will certainly be here in a few days, and we ſhall underſtand one another very well when he comes.'—' I am undone, Sophia;' cried I, ' my ſilence has undone me, but I will now preſerve it as long as I live. I will not make you unhappy, Sophia; I will bear my wretchedneſs in ſecret.'

" This," ſaid Jones, " is one of the inconſiſtencies of love; I betrayed my paſſion in declaring my reſolution to keep it a ſecret. Sophia likewiſe, in her determination not to underſtand me, diſcovered that ſhe underſtood me but too well.

' I am ſorry you have any thing to make you unhappy,' ſaid ſhe,

' any

'any thing that it is neceſſary to hide from a friend, which believe me I am; but as it *is* neceſſary, I will not inquire into it, and, indeed, I think you ought not to divulge it.' Theſe words, her look, her manner, all clearly ſhowed that ſhe knew what was paſſing at my heart, and that ſhe dreaded an explanation; which ſhe evaded without much difficulty: for though my ſoul was at times on my lips, my ſenſe of the delicate ſituation in which I ſtood, both with reſpect to Sophia and to Montague, aided her endeavour to repreſs the avowal, and we were parted by the return of the family, without my confirming with words what no words could have rendered more clear.

 " Well,

"Well, Morland, not to tire you with details, though, alas! too interefting to me, the week, the fortnight that was to bring Montague back, paffed away, and ftill Montague was deftroying partridges; or, at leaft, he left his miftrefs to confole herfelf for his abfence, with the fuppofition that his paffion for bringing down the birds continued to fway him in preference to the paffion that was to have brought him to Ex-Mount in a few days. A third week elapfed, and Montague neither came nor wrote. In all this time I was never once alone with Sophia, who, I feveral times faw avoiding the opportunities that offered, which fhe had never done before.

"My

"My affection for Montague was weakened; but while I dreaded his return, I wondered at the apathy that could ſuffer him to live ſo long from the moſt beautiful of women, whoſe hand was waiting the moment he could break away from a barbarous pleaſure. From dreading that moment, I now felt indignation at finding the time ſo ſhamefully protracted, and hoped that Sophia might diſplay a ſpirit that ſhould cruſh pretenſions ſo careleſsly ſupported. I conceived, however, that I could read in her countenance mortification and humility prevailing over pride: in watching her looks I alſo fondly fancied that they told me her preference of Montague was not

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ſo decided as her father thought; and, reflecting on her raillery reſpecting Miſs Nugent, I began to ſuſpect that he had purchaſed this ſhow of preference by a baſe perverſion of truth. If ſo, thought I, ſhe has already diſcovered the cheat, already thrown from her heart the unworthy deluder of it, and I may yet hope. This idea, once raiſed, was eagerly confirmed by my imagination, which now painted to me, Montague aſhamed to face me, afraid to deny, and incapable of ſupporting the treachery which could not but be detected. Oh, Morland! what miſerable days, what wretched, ſleepleſs nights did I paſs at that time!

"Mon-

" Montague's unaccountable conduct threw an awkwardneſs on both families whenever we met, for from being, at firſt, frequently mentioned by Mr. Nevill with a degree of rapture and high expectation, he gradually became the ſubject of his ſurpriſe and anxious conjecture; and was at laſt entirely, yet ſullenly, omitted in his converſation.

" As for me, a renewed hope had ſprung up in my breaſt, and I reſolved, be the conſequence what it would, to lay my heart open to Sophia. The conſciouſneſs of Montague's neglect, the certainty of its being noticed by all who knew of his aſſiduities at Ex-Mount, and the painful attempts of our family to ren-

render the Nevills eaſy on the ſubject, ſometimes by favourable ſuppoſitions, and ſometimes, indeed more generally, by avoiding every alluſion to it, ſo wounded her feelings, that for a conſiderable time paſt, ſhe had frequently made excuſes for not accompanying Mr. and Mrs. Nevill in their viſits. They had then an invitation from Sir Nicholas and Lady Broke, to whom we alſo were engaged, and I determined to ſeize the occaſion to obtain an uninterrupted converſation with Sophia. I was confident ſhe would not go; I therefore rode over to Broke-Hall, on the morning of the appointed day, to make an excuſe for myſelf, which I told my mother I meant to do, and as ſhe and my fa-

ther

ther knew my opinion of the baronet, it required no explanation.

" Having thus ſecured the opportunity, I waited in Exeter, till the parties were on the way to Broke-Hall, and then went to Ex-Mount. On going in I was told that nobody was at home, but proceeding to the hall I was met by Mary, who begged me to ſtep into the parlour. ' Mr. Jones,' ſaid ſhe, ' you had better not ſee my miſtreſs, it will only make her more unhappy.' ' Then, Mary, you know ſhe is unhappy.' — ' I don't mean to ſay unhappy,' replied ſhe, ' but vexed and uncomfortable, as who would not? and ſhe deſired to ſee nobody.'—' Surely,' cried I, ' ſhe will ſee me.'—' Indeed, ſir, pray

pray forgive me,' ſaid Mary, 'but ſhe particularly deſired that nobody ſhould be let in to-day, not even you, if you ſhould happen to come.'

"This girl is a worthy creature, and had been in the family for ſome years, in the laſt two of which, her place was that of Sophia's maid. Her attachment to her miſtreſs was great, and ſhe had treated me, while yet but a boy, with marked kindneſs; I had an affectionate regard for her, and always ſpoke to her freely and kindly. 'Mary,' ſaid I, 'I muſt ſee her, I have ſomething very particular to communicate, and wiſh to ſee her alone, which I may not ſoon have another opportunity of doing.' On hearing this ſhe conſented

ſented to carry a meſſage up to her miſtreſs, and in a few minutes returned with an anſwer that ſhe would come down preſently. It was ſome time, however, before ſhe came, and my imagination painted her in the ſituation I had formerly found her in, which made a delay neceſſary, that ſhe might compoſe herſelf before ſhe appeared.

"At length ſhe entered, with her uſual grace, and with that captivating ſmile that wins the heart; but her face had loſt its natural vermillion; a ſlight tinge of it lingered on her cheek. 'How comes it,' ſaid ſhe, 'that you are not at Broke-Hall?'—'Will you,' replied I, 'agree that we ſhall both candidly anſwer the queſtion

queſtion reciprocally put? How comes it, Sophia, that you are not at Broke-Hall?' 'Have you ever found me uncandid?' ſaid ſhe. 'Not uncandid,' I ſaid, 'but lately myſterious. Do not be myſterious with me, Sophia; there is not on earth a being ſo anxious for your happineſs as I am: you will believe me when I aſſure you that I am ready to ſacrifice my own to it. I have diſengaged myſelf on purpoſe to ſee you, to tell you all I feel, all I wiſh, all I would do for you.' 'Jones,' ſaid ſhe, with a countenance in which pity, affection, and diſtreſs were mingled, 'do not make me wretched by expreſſing a wiſh that it is not in my power to grant. I *will* be candid. Alas! I *now* underſtand you but too well.

Would

Would to heaven I had underſtood you as well when you left us! But it is too late. Once more let me refer you to your friend.'—'But,' cried I, 'you promiſed that I ſhould ſee him a month ago. He does not come: where is he? what is he about?' She gazed at me and was ſilent. 'Does ſuch apathy, ſuch negligence, deſerve a woman like Sophia? Do they not diſguſt? Will they not root out the favourable impreſſions made by a deceitful exterior and ſhowy accompliſhments?'

"The ſlight colour ſhe had brought into the room with her, forſook her cheeks: the paleneſs that overſpread her face and neck alarmed

ed me. I dreaded a ſimilar relapſe to that I had witneſſed in her ſtudy, and, taking her hand, beſought her to ſupport herſelf. She could not, however, refrain giving way to a ſhower of tears, during which my ſenſations were moſt miſerable.

" After a few minutes, but while the tears ſtill flowed down her cheeks, ſhe ſaid: 'My mind is lately become very weak and eaſily agitated. It is ſome nervous diſorder— You muſt not imagine, Jones, that there is any other cauſe. As for the ſeeming neglect to which you allude, you are miſtaken; and even if you were not, my pride would never ſuffer me to give it a moment's conſideration, far leſs allow it to humble

humble me to tears. I took your advice, and ſpoke to Mr. Rundle; I ſhall get better by and by.'—'God grant it!' exclaimed I: 'but, Sophia, let me not loſe this opportunity of ſettling my own agitated mind, by preciſely aſcertaining the ſituation of yours in regard to Montague. Tell me, I conjure you, tell me, are you engaged to marry him?' —'Jones,' ſaid ſhe, endeavouring to reſume compoſure, and looking at me ſteadily, 'my father has the firſt right to the anſwer to that queſtion; but he has never thought of aſking it, for he does not imagine I could engage myſelf without his conſent.'—'Your father,' replied I, 'had no doubt that Montague meant to propoſe himſelf to you.'—'Attend to me,' ſaid ſhe; 'the

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'the moment I perceived your friend's intention, and I could not doubt it, I did my duty—' as ſhe ſaid this, a tear again ſtarted to her eye, but ſhe repreſſed it—'I did my duty, and apprized my father of my obſervation. He knows no more, nor ſhall I create an uneaſineſs which may be altogether prevented by a little longer delay: but I think it incumbent upon me, my dear friend,—yes, Jones, you are, you ever ſhall be among the deareſt of my friends—' here, again, her eyes were full of tears, 'I think it incumbent upon me,' ſhe ſaid, 'to put an immediate end to every doubt and every hope on this ſubject; *I am irrevocably engaged to Montague.*'

"Though

"Though I had dwelt for many weeks on the certainty of this confeffion, I feemed altogether unprepared for the fhock; I clafped my hand, and remained dumb and motionlefs, while Sophia melting at the effect it produced upon me, yielded to her emotion, and again gave way to tears. It was fome time before I could fpeak, and not till fhe faid; 'Jones, you diftrefs me extremely.' Thus recalled to a fenfe of Sophia's fituation, I ftrove to conquer my feelings, and to perfift in the refolution of preferring her happinefs to mine. 'Happy Montague!' cried I, 'may all the bleffings of life crown your union! Yet, Sophia, what means his abfence? Do you not think it ftrange?'—'I do, fhe faid,

ſaid, ' for he ſolemnly promiſed me to return in the courſe of ten days or a fortnight at fartheſt, and aſk my hand of my father.' ' It is now more than a month,' ſaid I. ' I cannot account for it,' ſhe replied— ' ſome accident may have happened to him, or perhaps ſome new face detains him.'

" She ſpoke this with ſo great a degree of indifference, that it inſpired a remnant of hope that ſhe had ſuffered herſelf to be piqued into this engagement, and encouraged me to ſay : ' Is your heart decidedly Montague's, Sophia'—' After what I have ſaid,' replied ſhe, ' what anſwer can I give to that queſtion.'—' But,' ſaid I, ' ſhould he prove unworthy

the—' 'Stop,' cried ſhe, interrupting me, 'I have plighted my hand; and be aſſured, Jones, *that I will never be the wiſe of any other man than Montague.*'

"I now told her that as I found her reſolution ſo fully taken, it only remained for me to aſſure her, that I would as long as I lived, love her as a ſiſter, and with a fervour that would ever prompt me to ſacrifice my feelings, and my life itſelf to her welfare. As I ſaid this, ſhe regarded me with an intereſt that, but for what had paſſed, I could have conſtrued into an indication of love; and ſhe exclaimed that I merited a worthier heart than

 hers,

hers, but that while I continued to think her deſerving the affection of a ſiſter, ſhe ſhould ever be proud and delighted to conſider me as her friend and brother. There was in her manner and conduct, a ſtriking but inexplicable inconſiſtency; for while the latter cruſhed every hope, the former ſeemed calculated, in ſpite of herſelf, to obviate deſpair.

"The conſequence of theſe countervailing impulſes was, that I reſolved, before I finally relinquiſhed her, to ſee Montague, and to talk to him of her. Nor did my impatience allow me to wait his leiſure: on quitting Sophia I reſolved to go immedi-

immediately to him, wherever he might be. When I expreſſed my wiſh to my father, he readily conſented, and had even been thinking of propoſing it himſelf to me. He ſaid that he felt extremely for the Nevills, as in every company, the time of Montague's return was the conſtant queſtion; and at Broke-Hall Sophia's abſence had not been paſſed over without an inſinuation and a ſneer.

"I had heard Montague ſpeak of his Dorſetſhire friend, whoſe name is Palmerſton, to whoſe houſe I immediately went, and found that he had left it above a fortnight. Being, however, determined to ſee him, I followed him to another friend's in

Wiltſhire. There we met, and he received me with a warmth and cordiality that wore the appearance of unabated friendſhip; and when I gently reproached him for the neglect of his promiſe to meet me on our tour, he accounted for it ſo circumſtantially, calling in his French valet, François, to declare that he had himſelf carried the loſt letters to the poſt, and repeating to me the contents of them, that I was perfectly ſatisfied on that head. But when I ſpoke of his quitting Devonſhire, juſt as I was returning home, and of his ſilence ſince, he ſmiled and ſaid he had a good deal to ſay on the ſubject; and that far from having to complain of him, I ſhould find his conduct, even in that particular,

an

an exertion of his friendſhip; but he inſiſted on poſtponing the converſation till he had introduced me to the family, to whom he was on a viſit. As the ſhort delay could make little difference, I yielded, and went with him to be preſented to his friends, whoſe name is Betteſworth. My thoughts conſtantly wandering to Sophia, and my mind anxious for an explanation of Montague's intentions reſpecting her, I paſſed the day under a reſtraint little ſuited to render me agreeable to the gay ſociety into which I was unexpectedly hurried. I was abſent and incoherent; and, to complete the confuſion and tumult of my mind, Montague's aſſiduities to the elder

Miſs Betteſworth, a fine girl, about nineteen, were by no means of an equivocal nature.

"Early the next morning he came, of his own accord, to my room. With the moſt inſinuating addreſs he took my hand, and calling me familiarly, John, as was his cuſtom, he aſſured me that he was more intereſted in my happineſs than he could expreſs. 'Judge,' ſaid he, 'of the ſincerity of my heart by the candour with which I ſhall confeſs an unwarrantable piece of artifice, of which I have been guilty reſpecting you: and let the friendſhip that prompts my preſent determination ſecure my pardon for having once har-

harboured a thought of attempting to ſupplant you in the heart of the lovely Sophia Nevill.'—' Attempting!' exclaimed I, ' ſay not attempting; for if ever I poſſeſſed ſuch an intereſt in Sophia's breaſt, you have been fully ſuccefsful in ſuperſeding me there: but I do not blame you, Montague, for I never confided in you my feelings towards Miſs Nevill—indeed, I knew them not myſelf—and that you ſhould love her does not excite my wonder; I only wonder how you have been able to protract your abſence. I ſhould be inclined to diſpute with you ſuch a prize, were I not certain that there does not remain the ſhadow of a chance for me.'—' You are miſtaken, John,' replied he, ' believe me,

you, and you alone, are the poſſeſſor of her heart.'

"I heard him with aſtoniſhment; I gazed for an explanation.—'Hear,' continued he, 'and be convinced. It is true you never directly made me the confidant of a paſſion for this lovely girl, and I might therefore take the occaſion to exculpate myſelf completely in regard to our friendſhip; but I am ſuperior to ſuch a ſubterfuge. It was clear to me that the flame lay dormant in your breaſt, and would break out on your return home; but it did not enter into my imagination that I ſhould ever feel an intereſt or a wiſh to ſmother it. Accident carried me into Devonſhire

before you; an accident, too, that was the conſequence of my receiving no anſwer to the letter I wrote to you while you were in the north; for after waiting full a fortnight for it, I yielded to the repeated ſolicitations of my friend Palmerſton, and accompanied him to his ſeat in Dorſetſhire, where I met Harriſon, who prevailed upon me to go with him to Exeter. Having heard you extol Miſs Nevill, it was natural for me to wiſh to ſee her, and who that ſees her once but muſt wiſh to ſee her again! I was introduced by Harriſon at Ex-Mount, where I repeated my viſits too frequently to reſiſt Miſs Nevill's charms. By Heavens! John, I became deſperately enamoured. I ſoon, however, diſco-

vered that the ſtate of her heart was towards you, preciſely what yours was towards her; that there wanted but a breath to kindle the flame. Thus circumſtanced what could I do? I own it would have been heroic to have conquered my own feelings; that it would have been noble to have torn from my fancy the hope of bliſs, and thrown you into each others arms: but in the character of man there is not ſo difficult a part to play, and I confeſs I was unequal to it. I fondly perſuaded myſelf that as you were ſtill ignorant of each others ſentiments, the ſmothering of an embryo paſſion would neither be painful nor difficult. I was convinced that you would conquer yours from principle,

once

once that Sophia were engaged to another, and I really was not bound by any thing that had paſſed between you and me to refrain from a ſuit to which I was ſo irreſiſtibly impelled: my great obſtacle lay with Sophia, and my object was to ſmooth the way to the removal of it. I did every thing in my power to render myſelf agreeable to her, but I obſerved that ſhe was always more pleaſed with me when I ſpoke in your praiſe than when I was the moſt anxious, by my looks and my attentions, to ſhow her the impreſſion ſhe had made upon my heart. Truſting to the argument with which I had perſuaded myſelf that the conqueſt of a paſſion merely incipient would not be attended

with much pain, I had recourſe to the artifice I alluded to. Before I proceed, John, give me your pardon; and give it me, not becauſe I deſerve it, but on theſe grounds; the witchcraft of Sophia's charms, and the impotence of the trick: nay, forgive me in conſideration of its having proved the inviolable attachment of the woman of your heart.'

"Here I interrupted him: 'What can you mean?' cried I, 'have you not engaged the hand of Miſs Nevill?'—'Reſtrain your impatience, my dear friend,' ſaid he, 'and hear me out. At the confeſſion I am about to make, you will, no doubt, feel a reſentment riſe; but I beſeech

beſeech you to reſtrain it till you have heard me out, for then, I am confident you will pardon me.' I deſired him to proceed. 'I conceived,' ſaid he, 'that if Miſs Nevill were perſuaded that your heart was attracted by another woman, it would ſoon leave hers free for the admiſſion of another attachment. I tried the ſtratagem, I talked of Sophia Nugent, with whom you uſed to dance laſt winter. I had ſeveral of your notes by me, in which you artleſsly betray your prepoſſeſſion for Sophia Nevill by expreſſions the force of which was unknown to yourſelf. I eaſily managed to change Nevill to Nugent, and I ſhowed thoſe paſſages to Sophia, without ſeeming to have any view

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in the communication. At firft it appeared to have the effect I wifhed: I redoubled my affiduities, I affailed her heart by every means I could devife; fhe feemed to liften to me with pleafure: I perceived I had made fome impreffion on her mind, and by inceffantly preffing a return of my paffion, obtained a reference to her father. This, was a great point gained; but I was not fatisfied to receive my happinefs from any decifion but that of Sophia, and I prevailed upon her at length to fay that fhe would be mine. I have, however, fome reafon to think that fhe confulted her father. Nevill is a worthy and an amiable man, and as he was generous enough to afford me every opportunity of addreffing his

his lovely daughter, I refolved to pay him the compliment of making a formal requeft of it. Your looks afk me, why I did not. 'There is the queftion: in the anfwer to which, I know your principles too well to doubt the concurrence of your opinion. Would you, John, marry a woman of whofe heart you had not the entire poffeffion?' I faid, 'certainly not.'—'You have then anfwered the queftion yourfelf. I foon difcovered that my judgment refpecting Sophia's freeing her heart from her youthful prepoffeffions fufficiently to admit another attachment was erroneous. I faw that I was, indeed, agreeable enough in her eyes to be thought of as a hufband; but then, I as clearly faw it was becaufe fhe

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imagined you indifferent to her. John, be aſſured that you are in full poſſeſſion of that girl's love. When I had daily proofs of this, in her manners and in her converſation, I became uneaſy at the length to which my courtſhip had been carried; for I was not unconſcious that the eyes of the world had been for ſome time upon us. To relinquiſh a heart that I could not make completely mine to a friend like you, to whom it originally belonged, and by whom I knew it to be infinitely prized, is not to me a very difficult taſk: with me love ſoon quits his hold, if he be not completely reciprocal, and of courſe I have not a heart that can be broke on ſuch an occaſion. My paſſion for Sophia, at the

the time your father's letter to Mr. Nevill announced the period of your return to Affington, had, upon the conviction of your being really the object of her soul, subsided into a fraternal friendship, and I would have given my whole fortune to have seen you united to her. Her person, indeed, retained all its attractions, but to a rational being what is the person without the heart? I too well know that they who marry for personal charms alone very soon repent their folly. I had, however, entangled myself in my scheme of hope; I knew not how to recede without wounding Miss Nevill: during the last week I was in Devonshire I was secretly the most unhappy of men.

I was

I was resolved to speak my mind freely to Sophia; but when I considered that I had absolutely urged her into an engagement, and that the world spoke of her preference, I repeatedly shrunk from the painful task. In this state I received Palmerston's letter reminding me of my promise for the first of September, and I determined to wait a more favorable opportunity, which I hoped your return would give me; for I believed that a few interviews between you and Sophia would give me better grounds to go upon, and even perhaps produce a direct dismissal from her. These were the views I had when I left Ex-Mount, and I have protracted my absence to give

give a greater ſcope for their being accompliſhed: Jones, ſhe muſt, ſhe ſhall be yours.'

"Conceive my emotions, Morland," continued Jones, "during this explanation. Though the progreſs and iſſue of Montague's paſſion were unfortunate, they appeared to me natural and rational; and my heart whiſpered me that his diſcernment of Sophia's partiality was accurate: her agitations, her tears, her looks, even ſome of her expreſſions actually confirmed it. If ſo, I could not have blamed him had I been an indifferent auditor; for, enamoured as I was, I would not have married her myſelf on ſuch terms; but alive to the enchantment of new hope, I threw

threw myſelf into Montague's arms, regarding him as a paragon at once of taſte and of virtue. Inſtead of talking of pardon, I called him my friend, my preſerver, my guardian-angel.

" I need not tell you that he was delighted at the effect his ſpeech had upon my mind: we conſulted on the beſt means to be adopted to ſave Sophia's pride, and it was determined that he ſhould write to her, explain his reaſons, and formally abſolve her from her engagement. Before I delivered the letter I was to reaſon with her, and to preſs my own ſuit. As to the opinion of the world, I was to prevail upon her to yield ſo far to the neceſſity of the caſe as to go

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into company, and to ſpeak of him with indifference, while on my part I reported the real fact of the artifice Montague had uſed to divert her affection from its original channel, which was to be confirmed in a penitential letter from himſelf to me. I was to forgive, Sophia to resent, his conduct; and the lovely girl was to beſtow her hand on him whom her heart had early elected. Such was the rapturous project with which I was fraught on my return to Devonſhire.

"Montague having written the letter brought it to me to read. I thought it a maſter-piece of eloquence, reaſon, and virtue. It contained

tained a relation of his friendſhip with me, his paſſion for her, the artifice he made uſe of, and the change of his feelings towards her, firſt regretting the cauſe as to himſelf, then congratulating both on the timely prevention of a union which muſt have been attended with jealouſy and reproach, or, what is perhaps worſe, with indifference. The ſentiment, the reaſoning, the ſtyle of the letter were calculated to perſuade, convince, and charm. After I had read it, he carried it back to his own apartment to ſeal, then returned with it to me, charging me, as he gave it, to deliver it privately, and not to ſtay with Sophia while ſhe read it. I thanked him again and

again;

again; I told him he had given me new life; he embraced me affectionately, and I set out for Exeter, my imagination fired with the most delightful anticipations."

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Continuation of Jones's Narrative.

"ON the road," continued Jones, "Sophia's words ſo emphatically pronounced, *I will never be the wife of any other man than Montague*, conſtantly recurred to my mind; but I ſoftened the recollection by reflecting that they had followed, and were the reſult of her declaration, that ſhe was *irrevocably engaged to him*. Having plighted her hand, it was natural for her to conceive the engagement irrevocable, and the conſequent determination was inevi-

table in ſuch a mind as Miſs Nevill's. I indulged my fancy in obviating theſe obſtacles; I carried with me the key that was to unlock the chain in which ſhe had unconſciously been fettered, that was to reſtore freedom to her deciſion; I pleaded my cauſe with all the ardour of a lover, I painted Sophia as yielding to the united powers of reaſon and paſſion, and I became in idea the happieſt of men.

"Having promiſed Montague to deliver his letter unſeen, and to let the communication proceed at firſt from Sophia, I wiſhed to obtain an interview with her before I ſaw my father; and what I thought hardly poſſible, chance threw in my way.

Unable to paſs Ex-Mount, I ordered the poſtboy to ring at the gate. From the ſervant that came to it I learned that Mr. Nevill was gone out on horſeback with Sir Nicholas Broke, and that the reſt of the family were walking through the grounds with Lady Broke and ſome other company. I ſent the poſt-chaiſe on to Affington with my portmanteau and a meſſage; and I went in, hoping to find the opportunity I ſo anxiouſly deſired. Mary met me at the door of the houſe; ſhe told me that her miſtreſs had been all the morning at Affington, whence ſhe was but juſt returned, and had gone up ſtairs to her own room. The family from Broke-Hall had come while ſhe was out.

I thought the occaſion favourable, and I ſent Mary to tell Sophia that I earneſtly intreated her to ſee me in her ſtudy, as I had ſomething very particular to communicate to her. In leſs than two minutes ſhe returned with permiſſion.

"Sophia was taking off her hat as I entered; her cheeks glowed from the effects of the air and her walk: I never ſaw her more beautiful, more to advantage, than as ſhe advanced to meet me, with her ſmile, and offered hand. I ſeized it, and preſſed it, with rapture, to my lips— 'Go to,' ſaid ſhe, 'this kind of gallantry is not written in the code of friendſhip: I ſhall ſhake hands with you no more.—So we had like

to have met on the road; I am juſt come from Affington-Houſe. And pray where have you been rambling, Jones? Is it a ſecret?' — 'In queſt of your happineſs, Sophia,' replied I, 'and perhaps my reward will be to have found my own; to have found it combined with Sophia's.'—'Jones,' ſaid ſhe, 'I intreat you once more, if you have any regard for my peace, to turn your thoughts into a different channel; for be aſſured that the reward you allude to, and my peace are incompatible.'—'So you at preſent imagine,' cried I, 'but I have a taliſman that ſhall alter your opinion.' — 'Impoſſible:' ſaid ſhe, ſhaking her head. 'Nay,' cried I, ſmiling, 'more than probable. I con-

conjure you to anſwer me one queſtion ſeriouſly and candidly, for my fate hangs upon your anſwer: had you never heard of ſuch a perſon as Sophia Nugent, would you have plighted yourſelf to Montague?' She looked thoughtfully at me, but made no reply. 'I will not urge you,' continued I, 'to confirm by words a ſilence ſo ſweetly explicit.'—'Why,' exclaimed ſhe uneaſily, 'will you perſiſt in examining a ſubject, which preſents nothing to either of us, but wretchedneſs extreme?'—'Happineſs,' cried I, 'happineſs. Montague has confeſſed the artifice: he bluſhes for it, and releaſes you, Sophia, from the fetters he ſo artfully contrived to fix upon you. Here,' ſaid I, taking his letter from my

 pocket,

pocket, 'here is my talifman: read, be charmed, and no longer think of robbing me of the reward of my dif-interefted paffion:—yes, I adore you, Sophia.'

"As I fpoke, with the letter in my hand, the blood forfook her cheeks. 'A letter for me?' faid fhe, faltering, 'and from whom?' 'From Montague.'—'Have you feen him?'—'I left him yefterday morning in Wiltfhire. He acts nobly, Sophia: his reafon predominates over his paffion—he relinquifhes his rights—'—''Tis falfe, Jones,' fhe cried, 'by Heaven, 'tis falfe!' Her lips quivered; there was a wildnefs in her look as fhe pronounced this affeveration, which fhe did with an em-

emphaſis, and in a pitch of voice I had never before heard her attempt. I was confounded: ſhe ſnatched the letter from my hand, and inſtantly tore it open before I could comply with Montague's injunction of leaving her to read it alone. As ſhe opened it an incloſure fell upon the table: of this he had given me no intimation. Her eyes ſeemed to fly over the letter, while ſudden changes of countenance marked the deep perturbation of her mind, and ſhe could not poſſibly have attended to any point of his reaſoning, when, with a ghaſtly ſmile, ſhe faintly uttered, 'No, by Heaven, 'tis true!' She then opened the incloſure, ſtared at the paper as ſhe read, and bùrſt into a frantic laugh; then gave

an hyſterical ſcream, and dropped ſuddenly on the floor.

"Though ſhocked and alarmed, I was afraid to ring the bell while the letters that had cauſed this dreadful agitation remained in ſight. I looked round the room for her hartſhorn, and not finding it, went into her chamber, which adjoined the ſtudy, and thence into a dreſſing-cloſet, where, after ſome ſearch, I found the phial, with which I haſtened back, hoping to bring her to herſelf without other aſſiſtance. Gueſs what I felt on returning, to ſee Lady Broke ſtanding by Sophia's breathleſs body, reading Montague's incloſed note. 'What do you mean, Madam?' cried I, ſnatching it from her

her hand. ‘Nay,’ ſaid ſhe, ‘it was natural to look for the cauſe of Miſs Nevill's illneſs, and you need not have been ſo haſty, for it concerns you too nearly, Mr. Jones, for me to have kept it from you.’ I had now put both the letter and incloſure into my pocket, and was rubbing Sophia's temples with hartſhorn. ‘Poor thing!’ continued Lady Broke, ‘I am ſhocked to ſee her in this ſtate: but Mr. and Mrs. Nevill are more to be pitied; though it muſt be confeſſed, they are not altogether without blame. Do not be uneaſy, Mr. Jones; ſhe will ſoon recover. It is a providential interference for you.’—‘Madam,’ ſaid I, ‘your language is all a riddle to me.’—‘It cannot be ſo long,’ replied ſhe:

'meanwhile I think it would be better that you left the room, left an abrupt refult of the girl's unfortunate fituation fhould embarrafs us.' —Her meaning now was but too evident— 'Infamous infinuation!' cried I. 'Very well, fir,' faid fhe, 'you will have the goodnefs to take care of the paper you have; and if you chufe to ftay and fee Mifs Nevill unlaced, you muft.' Saying this fhe rang the bell violently.

"Roufed by Lady Broke's vehemence, I exclaimed, addreffing the inanimate form of Sophia; 'Yes, I will leave you at prefent, lovelieft of your fex! and virtuous as lovely! nor will I fuffer any contaminated breath to foil your fame.' I then rofe

rofe from my kneeling pofture, and in a diftracted ftate, bade Lady Broke beware how fhe uttered the flighteft fufpicion againft the honour of fuch an angel. 'If you are fo far gone,' replied fhe, 'I pity you; but I think the paper you have pocketed will cure you: go and read it.' I ftaid not to reply, but meeting Mary on the ftair-cafe, begged her to come to me in her mafter's library, whither I was going, as foon as fhe could leave Sophia. I was no fooner in the library, than I took the fatal letters from my pocket, and, having bolted the door, haftily perufed the private one that had dropped from the other, as fhe eagerly tore it open. Here is the original," continued he, taking it out of his drawer, "I have

kept it as a maſter-piece of villany. It is no ſecret; for having been read by Lady Broke, you may take it for granted it was faithfully reported." I took the letter from Jones, and read as follows:

'Command yourſelf, Sophia; be rational, and reflect that not only your own honour, but the happineſs of your family, perhaps the life of ſome of them, depends upon your conduct in the preſent criſis of our affairs. I refer you to my letter which incloſes this for the arguments that may be publicly uſed in ſupport of our mutual intereſt in declining a union, and even of our moral obligation to relinquiſh the thought of it. They are founded on truth, Sophia, however unfortunately late it has ope-

operated. Your attachment to Jones is but too evident; it was ſown in your heart before we met, and I am fully ſatisfied of the impoſſibility of its ever being rooted out. But I will not repeat what I have ſaid in my letter, which will convince you, that under ſuch a perſuaſion our marriage would not only be certain wretchedneſs, but a crime of an enormous kind. *That* letter is calculated to meet the eye of the world, when you and Jones have arranged your plans; all blame will redound on me, and yet I ſhall meet pity, and even be applauded for the virtue that prompts me to releaſe you from the engagement in which my artifice had involved you: *this* letter is for your eye alone; and here let me con-

conjure you, to take the only advice that can avert the mifchief, which threatens to be the confequence of our having inconfiderately anticipated thofe intimacies which we intended to confecrate by marriage, but which we cannot now confirm by legal ceremonies, without committing a much greater fin. — *You* love Jones, *he* adores you. He is ardent and will prefs an early union: his family doat upon you, your own, in refentment to me, will be glad to haften your marriage with him. It *muft* be haftened, Sophia; you underftand me well, it *muft* be haftened; in which cafe the remaining months will afford opportunities of managing the future concealment as to time. I fhall have received my

par-

pardon ere the period of your confinement, which may be contrived to take place unexpectedly at a distance from Devonshire, perhaps among some of my friends, while I take care to keep Jones out of the way, and divert his ideas from every train of suspicion. Believe me, my friend, it will be easily managed; and, by your present prudence, you will convert the misery that now threatens those most dear to you, into general joy. I know you will feel repugnant to the art which this advice implies, but think of the effects it is to produce: the preservation of your own fame, the salvation of your family. You will perhaps exclaim—What! impose upon the man I love; present him the child of another as his!—I

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own the juftnefs of your emotion. Your feelings will be very painful: but by determining to endure thofe feelings for a while, you make him happy; whereas the confequence of a difcovery of your fituation is wretchednefs to him, to your family, to all connected with either of you; for I know he loves you too much to bear life without you. I deteft hypocrify, but what I advife is none —Your fidelity, your confidence in future, and the confcioufnefs of his being the real object of your affection, will reward his love, and in time relieve your own mind from the pain of this fingle, neceffary, I will fay, virtuous, concealment. You have too good an underftanding, Sophia, not to yield to the neceffity of

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our unhappy fate, and I ſhall therefore only add that in reſigning you to the man of your heart, I have ſtruggled ſeverely with my own paſſion; but the thought of remaining a ſecondary object is worſe than death. Had I been fortunate enough to have been the principal one in Miſs Nevill's mind, I ſhould have been the happieſt of men, in being united for life with the nobleſt and moſt beautiful of women. Grant me, however, your friendſhip, accept of mine, and pardon the feelings, I beſeech you, too lovely Sophia, which led to an error, in its reſult ſo painful, yet in its progreſs ſo bewitching.

'H. M.'

" Con-

"Conſummate villain!" exclaimed I, as I concluded the peruſal of this finiſhed piece of baſe effrontery. I felt my indignation gradually riſe from the firſt line; and, at the laſt, temperate as my diſpoſition was by nature, I could have blown the writer's brains out, without remorſe. Jones wiped a tear, from his eye and repeated after me; "Conſummate villain, indeed!"—"Does he live?" ſaid I. "Did he not deſerve death?" replied he; "but you ſhall hear.

"You may, in ſome degree, imagine, from your own feelings, what mine muſt have been as I read this letter. At firſt a chill ran through

my blood, and a kind of ſtupefaction, for ſome moments, ſuſpended the uſe of my faculties: as this returned, I doubted my ſenſes; but that doubt was ſoon removed by a repetition of the peruſal of the letter. I then aſſured myſelf that it was a fabrication, and ſome new artifice of Montague's to ſecure, by a threat of ſlander, Sophia's eaſier reſignation of a hand now devoted to Miſs Betteſworth: alas! this deluſion ſoon vaniſhed like the former; the ſtyle as evidently bore the marks of truth as of villany, and I concluded with believing that the ſcoundrel had really triumphed over her virtue. The moſt agonizing images ruſhed on my fancy: rage and reſentment took poſſeſſion of my heart; and I formed the

the reſolution of ridding the world of the monſter.

"While I was in this ſtate, the letter ſtill in my hand, I heard a noiſe in the hall, and preſently Mrs. Nevill's voice, crying, 'where? what's the matter?' Shortly after this a violent ringing, and perſons running about the houſe. I eaſily conceived the occaſion to be Mrs. Nevill's return and diſtreſs, and being convinced that Lady Broke would refer her to me for the letter, I reſolved it ſhould not appear, and putting it into my pocket-book, tore another into very ſmall pieces and ſcattered the fragments on the floor. I had ſcarcely done this when ſome perſon tried to open the door, which

I ran

I ran and unbolted, and Mary came in with tears in her eyes. 'Is Sophia recovered?' cried I. 'No, Sir, replied ſhe, and Thomas is gone for Mr. Rundle. Oh! dear Mr. Jones, I am afraid ſhe will never recover.' —'Where is Mrs. Nevill?' 'In the room with her.' — 'And Lady Broke?'—'Where you left her.'— 'How came ſhe up ſtairs?'—'Being tired of walking, ſhe returned to the parlour before the reſt of the company, and ſhe ran up on hearing Miſs Sophia ſcream and fall —ſo ſhe told me before my miſtreſs came in.'—'Has ſhe ſaid any thing about Miſs Nevill?'—'Oh! yes, yes; firſt to me, and afterwards to my miſtreſs. My poor miſtreſs is at this very moment diſtracted between attending to Miſs Sophia and quar-

quarrelling with her ladyſhip. She has ordered me to come and look for you, and to beg you not to go out of the houſe till ſhe ſees you.'

" My agitation," continued Jones, " was extreme: I would have flown from the horrors of the ſcene, had I not been reſtrained by an irreſiſtible power that would not ſuffer me to move before I heard that Sophia's ſenſes were recalled. I deſired Mary to tell her miſtreſs that I would wait, and that I begged her not to attend to what Lady Broke ſaid. Left again by myſelf, the ſad reflections that occurred excited in my mind the moſt poignant grief. That Sophia had been ſeduced by the diabolical machinations of the arch fiend who had profaned the names of friend-

friendſhip and of love was too evident; but it was no leſs clear that he had uſed no common means, and that the virtue he had ſullied was innate in her heart, was firmly rooted, and not to be plucked from its ſoil. The injury it had ſuſtained could not even ſhake it: by whatever means Sophia had been deceived, ſhe conſidered her deceiver as her huſband; and her peace, perhaps her life, would be the forfeit of her having confided in the treachery he had practiſed: but ſullied it was, and far from ever recovering its luſtre in the eyes of the world, calumny would but too ſurely augment and fix the ſtain, though in the ſight of angels it had perhaps reſted no longer than the breath does on poliſhed

lifhed fteel in the fight of men. Such were my thoughts, and I refolved, not only on account of Sophia, but for the fake of her family, and for the fake of my own family, whom the mifery would reach, to extenuate the fact revealed by the letter, and to counteract, as well as I could, the ready report of Lady Broke, whofe memory I hoped to prove was not very tenacious, particularly on fo curfory a perufal as fhe muft have given the letter.

"Frefh ringing, and another buftle took place in the hall, which I prefently learned from Mary, who returned to me, was occafioned by the abrupt departure of all the company

pany, without ſeeing Mrs. Nevill. 'Is Lady Broke gone?' ſaid I. 'She is, ſir! replied Mary, 'my miſtreſs bid her go; for no ſooner did Miſs Sophia open her eyes than, ſeeing her ladyſhip, ſhe fainted away again.' Knowing that Mrs. Nevill was alone with Sophia, I would fain have gone up to her, but Mary perſuaded me not to go, leſt my preſence might have a ſimilar effect. While ſhe was with me Mr. Rundle rang at the gate, and ſhe went to ſhew him up ſtairs. I now remained a conſiderable time alone in a ſituation even more pitiable than Sophia's. At length I was joined by Mrs. Nevill, who had left her daughter to the care of Rundle to come and learn the contents of the dreadful letter which had produced

ſuch an effect. Her eyes red and ſwollen with weeping, ſhe advanced and aſked me for it. ‘ My dear, dear Mrs. Nevill,’ ſaid I, pointing to the ſcattered ſhreds on the floor, ‘ in the height of my indignation I tore it to pieces.’ — ‘ Then,’ exclaimed ſhe, ‘ we are loſt, for we ſhall have no teſtimony againſt the tongue of Lady Broke, whoſe aſſertions will but be corroborated by what you have done, falſe as they are.—Yes,’ cried ſhe, burſting into freſh tears, ‘ falſe; for I will pledge my life on my Sophy’s honour.’ Saying this ſhe leaned her head upon my ſhoulder, and wept bitterly. I ſaid that I imagined Lady Broke miſunderſtood the letter, which was indeed an infamous one, threatening Sophia with defa-

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mation if ſhe oppoſed the views expreſſed in the cover which encloſed it, and that I would be aſſiduous in counteracting any ſlander that might be the conſequence of the effect it had had on Miſs Nevill.' — 'Oh! the villain!' cried ſhe: 'there was no need of ſuch a threat to prevail upon my girl to give up a man who could but form ſuch a wiſh. Where is the other letter?' I ſaid I would give it to her if ſhe deſired it, but that, being partly the ſubject of it myſelf, I knew not how to remain in her preſence while ſhe read it. 'You need not bluſh, my dear boy,' ſaid ſhe, embracing me, 'at what he can ſay of you: beſides, I already know, by Lady Broke's information, his propoſal reſpecting you, and all I

ſhall ſay about it is, would to God we had never ſeen this bad man! Give me the letter.' I obeyed her, but before ſhe had time to read half a page of it, Mary came in to tell her that Sophia was come to herſelf, on which ſhe put the letter into her pocket, and flew out of the room without ſaying a word.

"I continued to walk to and fro in the library, for I was unable, in the ſtate my mind was, to leave Ex-Mount. In about half an hour Mr. Rundle came, and propoſed to carry me home in his carriage. I requeſted him to give me firſt ſome account of Miſs Nevill, and to tell me whether he thought her life in danger. He ſaid he did not think her in

in immediate danger, and as to other particulars, he would talk to me on the way, but that he wished we should both be out of the house before Mr. Nevill returned: on which I immediately accompanied him, and we left Ex-Mount. From Mr. Rundle I learned that, after repeated faintings, Sophia, partly in a deranged state, and partly in a rational and firm manner, in defiance of his presence, avowed her situation, and related the villany that had been practised by Montague.

" The villain having, as he hoped, removed from her mind all previous prepossession, urged his own passion, with which she confessed herself to have been pleased, declaring, that at that time she would not have scru-

pled to give him her hand, had he aſked it of her father: but that ſoon after, her mind experienced a change in conſequence of ſome improprieties which ſhe diſcovered in his conduct, not however ſo glaring as to juſtify a breach. He contrived to reinſtate himſelf in her good opinion. One evening, towards the concluſion of a dance given by Mrs. Nevill, Sophia was taken ill, and retired to her ſtudy, at which he appeared more than commonly anxious, and was permitted to carry her ſome wine and water himſelf. In a few minutes ſhe was ſo much revived as to return to the company, and to go down another dance with Montague, but as ſhe got to the bottom of it, a giddineſs coming on, ſhe requeſted him to take no notice of her retiring, and bade

bade him good night. She ſpoke to her mother as ſhe left the room, ſaying ſhe ſhould be better after a night's reſt, and went to bed, where an unaccountable confuſion in her brain took place. It laſted all night, going gradually off towards morning; and ſhe remembered liſtening a conſiderable time, uncertain whether dreaming or in reality, to the arguments and perſuaſions of Montague, before ſhe was fully ſenſible that it was no dream. Peace from that moment forſook her breaſt; but the villain had art enough to enſure a temporary concealment, altering her firſt reſolutions of horror, by the picture he drew of the conſequences of diſcloſure, while he ſtated the eaſe with which his fault

in the anticipation of his happineſs might be repaired; pleading the irreſiſtible violence of his paſſion and entreating her to become his wife. With the ſame horrid engine, fear, he effected a continuation of his intercourſe while he was fertile in finding plauſible pretexts for delaying his marriage; ſometimes urging the neceſſity of firſt ſettling his affairs, which would take but a ſhort time, as ſoon as he could tear himſelf from her; ſometimes compelling ſubmiſſion by tyrannical hints of deſertion. Thus terrified into a paſſive endurance of guilt, Sophia began to loſe her health, and conſciouſneſs combining with natural cauſes reduced her to the ſad ſtate I have already deſcribed. When Montague left

Ex-Mount he aſſured her, that he ſhould not ſpend two days with Palmerſton, but proceed immediately to town to look into the ſtate of his affairs and ſettle them completely, when he would return, and demand her hand formally of her father.

"Poor Sophia," continued Jones, wiping his tears away, "ſhe was the victim of an infernal treachery. Sooner would ſhe have died, had not her faculties been chained by the influence of ſome diabolical potion. Rundle aſſured me, that he had no doubt, from her deſcription of her feelings, that the villain had adminiſtered drugs that were at once to ſtupify and inflame. I expreſſed grief, hor-

ror, and execration, and I was about to impart the refolution I had formed, when I recollected that the difclofure might be the means of preventing it; I therefore liftened to Rundle, and coincided in the decifion taken by him and Mrs. Nevill, to keep the fact if poffible from her father's knowledge, and to accufe any reporter of it of flander. Mr. Nevill was the moft open and unfufpicious of men, but he was as firm as he was delicate on the fubject of female purity; he was befides a man of high fpirit, and the confequences of his knowing what had happened, were in every way to be dreaded.

"It was almoft as difficult to explain the events of the morning at

Affington-

Affington-Houſe; for my father was as nice in his opinions as his friend, Mr. Nevill. Rundle had undertaken, at the expreſs deſire of Mrs. Nevill, to be the firſt to relate and to ſoften the circumſtances to him; but, as it was with his concurrence that I had gone after Montague, I was puzzled how to act: I agreed, however, upon going in to leave the relation to my companion, and to corroborate as I could.

"This was ſcarcely determined, when, turning in at the gate, we met Lady Broke's carriage. 'Alas!' cried Rundle, 'calumny has outſtripped us; the tale is travelling faſt in every direction of the country, and through every ſtreet of the city.' Lady Broke ordered

dered her poſtilion to draw up cloſe tó our chaiſe. 'Well, Rundle,' cried ſhe, 'you have been at Ex-Mount: is it a miſcarriage?'—'Indeed, madam,' replied he, 'your imagination in this caſe has been too rapid—it is all a miſtake.'—'O dear,' ſaid ſhe, ſmiling contemptuouſly, 'I dare ſay ſo. Mr. Jones,' continued ſhe, addreſſing me, 'I hear that yõu were the firſt favoured lover, and that you adroitly contrived to make the lady over to your friend. Mrs. Grimwood has been here rallying your father on the occaſion; for I no ſooner mentioned the circumſtance, than ſhe ſaid it had long been ſuſpected, and that it was generally believed, that Montague's conduct was owing to his conviction, that you had been

his

his predeceſſor; and let me tell you, Jones, the letter you pocketed in a paſſion, will confirm the fact, unleſs you can explain. I don't wonder now at the violence of your behaviour this morning. It will behove you to explain.' I made no reply, but ordered the poſt-boy to drive on.

"At home I found my mother and ſiſter in tears, and my father very grave. Rundle contradicted, hoped, extenuated, without removing the ſorrow the tale had raiſed, which was leſs counteracted by his anxiety, than confirmed by my melancholy ſilence. My father aſked me, if I had ſeen Montague, and if he were coming back. On my ſaying, I had ſeen him, but that he did not mean

to return at preſent, a general ſilence took place, till Rundle ſaid, that the fellow's conduct was very unaccountable; but that it behoved Miſs Nevill's friends to oppoſe the torrent of ſlander which had broke looſe. 'We muſt be guided by circumſtances,' replied my father, 'the Nevills are all very dear to me.' He then changed the ſubject, and my mother and Louiſa retired. Mr. Rundle ſoon after left us.

"As ſoon as we were alone, my father made minute and circumſtantial inquiries, reſpecting my meeting with Montague, and the occurrences at Ex-Mount. In all my communications with my father, I had never in my life deviated from that candour

dour which is the corner ſtone of family happineſs; nor could I now: indeed, any ſecret that could affect the Nevills was as ſafe with him as with me. I therefore related to him, without reſerve, the extent of their calamity. 'Poor Nevill!' cried he, 'my heart bleeds for him. His ſoul was wrapped up in that girl, and no wonder; ſhe was one of the lovelieſt, both in mind and perſon I ever ſaw: but ſhe is gone, gone for ever.'— 'Oh! ſir,' exclaimed I, ſhuddering, 'God forbid!' 'It is but too true, my dear boy,' replied he, 'and it is right it ſhould be true. Whether her conduct break her father's heart or not, ſhe muſt be diſmiſſed from his family: to uphold her were to

con-

contaminate the reſt; were to confound ſociety, and diſſolve the charm of marriage.'—'Do not ſay *her conduct*, ſir,' cried I, 'but—' '—I muſt ſay her conduct, John,' reſumed my father, interrupting me; 'for though I allow what you would ſuggeſt, as to want of power to prevent the diabolical crime committed by the wretch who now deſerts her, the continuance of her intercourſe with him completely aſſociated her in his guilt. What virtue would for an inſtant have endured it?'—'Will you,' ſaid I, 'allow nothing for the terror produced on her mind, for her ſolicitude to avert from her family the horrors of a diſcloſure, for her inexperience, for the anguiſh ſhe has ſuf-

ſuſtained, the health ſhe has loſt? Oh, ſir, Sophia is innocent, Sophia is virtuous.'—' I cannot, John, allow her to be pure,' replied he; ' ſhe is no longer a companion for the virtuous; no man of any ſenſibility will ever think of her as a wife, no family ever receive her as a daughter. With reſpect to yourſelf, my dear boy, whatever grounds Montague had to believe the attachment he talks of, whatever might have been your bias previous to this diſcovery, I would not, for my life, give birth to an idea that any diſhonourable or indelicate view could remain lurking in your breaſt. And as for her, poor, wretched girl, ſhe would be void of all grace indeed, could

could ſhe diveſt her mind of her being betrothed to the man whom ſhe conſidered ſo long as her huſband, or ever look upon herſelf but as his wife while he lives. But ſee, my ſon, to what an extent vice ſpreads: either Montague has been infamous enough, by inſinuations to involve your character in this unfortunate affair, or the tongue of common calumny has been buſy with it. This ſlander will fall more heavily upon you than you are aware of, if it be not removed before it fixes: not a parent but would mention your name with horror; not a door belonging to any family but would be barred againſt you.'

"Shocked at this ſuggeſtion, and recoiling from the very idea of the charge, I threw myſelf into my father's arms, aſſuring him that he had made me ſhudder, and begging him to ſave me. 'O, Heaven!' cried I; 'What a world is this! That I loved, Sophia Nevill is too true, but that I ever had a thought of degrading her ſoul is moſt falſe.' 'I believe it, John,' ſaid he, embracing me, 'and I have no doubt that we ſhall be able to repel this attack upon your honour, which, I truſt, will be unſullied through life.' He then adviſed me to be abſent from home for a week, and it was agreed that I ſhould go and pay a viſit to a friend of ours who lives near Chudleigh, where

my

my mother and ſiſter are juſt now. Little did my father think, that he afforded me an opportunity of purſuing, unmiſſed, the villain who had deſtroyed my happineſs."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Conclusion of Jones's Narrative.

JONES paused for a few minutes, as if unable to proceed, till he had again silently reviewed some of the images raised by his narrative, and now lingering on his mind. At length he exclaimed:

"Oh! they were dreadful scenes! dreadful, indeed, Morland!—Well! instead of going to Chudleigh, I turned towards Wiltshire, resolved to put Montague to death, or fall myself. Life was painful to me, and

and if any thing could diminiſh its wretchedneſs I felt it would be the conſciouſneſs of revenging the injuries of Sophia. On the road I meditated the manner of accompliſhing my deſign. I recollected that at foils, with which we had often amuſed ourſelves the preceding winter, we were nearly a match: I ſeldom received a hit which I did not repay. I therefore reſolved that our encounter ſhould be with ſwords, for I knew that he piqued himſelf upon his ſkill, and would prefer them. With reſpect to my own opinion, I really doubted which was the better fencer; but I was confident that I had the advantage in my cauſe, and I painted to my imagination the conſcious criminal, appalled,

palled, and receiving the puniſhment he merited.

"Though I had always thought Montague a man of great courage, I now apprehended that the ſenſe of his guilt would induce him to ſhun me if I gave him an opportunity, which I determined not to do, and I accordingly provided myſelf with two ſwords before I reached Twyford, the little village near which Mr. Betteſworth's eſtate lies. Having informed myſelf that he was ſtill at his friend's, I wrote a ſhort note, telling him that I had ſomething very particular to communicate to him, that I had a reaſon for not going to the houſe, and that, when he received my note, I ſhould be

alone

alone on the common near Mr. Bettefworth's fence. I fent it by a countryman, that he might not have an opportunity of enquiring into my motives, and I went immediately to pitch upon a fpot the leaft expofed.

"After walking about a quarter of a mile I came up to the entrance of an exhaufted quarry, which was in many parts overgrown with turf, and entirely out of fight till nearly approached. Placing the fwords, which I had managed to take with me unobferved, by the fide of a furze-bufh, I walked to the fpot neareft Mr. Bettefworth's palings, where I did not wait long before I obferved Montague at a little dif-

tance making towards me. I appeared not to ſee him, and drew him on following me till I was again at the entrance of the quarry: there I turned and eyed him with horror and inexpreſſible agitation as he came up.

" He advanced with his uſual ſmile, till reading my purpoſe in my countenance, he aſſumed a ſerious look, and exclaimed, 'What is the matter?' — 'Language,' replied I, 'has not words to tell the matter, or to expreſs my ſentiments upon it. I come not to talk with you, chooſe one of theſe ſwords and defend yourſelf.' I took them up as I ſaid this, and preſented them. 'What!' cried he, putting them both aſide

with his hand, 'Sophia then has acted like a fool! I am ſorry for it; but I am not diſpoſed to take your life on that account.' 'But, wretch,' cried I, 'I am diſpoſed to take yours; nor will I leave you till I have revenged the ruin yŏu have brought upon my friends, and the cool inſolence with which you marked me out for your dupe: once more I ſay, defend yourſelf.' The villain ſmiled with ineffable effrontery, and taking one of the ſwords put himſelf on the defenſive. I inſtantly attacked him with all the energy and ſkill in my power. He parried my thruſts without returning them, till finding me almoſt exhauſted by rage and exertion, he told me he ſaw that I was only play-

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ing with him: 'but come,' ſaid he, 'drop your point, and I will give you a piece of information.' I was not ſorry to recover the error into which paſſion had led me, and I dropped my point. 'Jones,' ſaid he, on ſeeing this, 'you know nothing of the weapon you have choſen. You preſume on having ſometimes touched me with the foils; but let me tell you that I uſed to allow you thoſe hits for the mere ſatisfaction of pleaſing, and to give you a good opinion of yourſelf.' Irritated by this, and feeling it an inſult, I cried, that it was falſe, and I would prove it to be ſo. 'Then,' replied he, 'you muſt not be ſo violent in your next aſſault, or you will be again in my power.'

This but provoked me the more, and I immediately affailed him He now returned my thrufts; I parried feveral of his, but he foon wounded me on my right fide, and feeing the blood, again defired me to defift. I maddened with rage, I faid it was an accidental fcratch, and making a defperate thruft, I had thought I run him through the body, but at the fame inftant I loft my fword, which, on my recovering my pofition, I had the mortification to fee in his hand. He fmiled and prefented it to me, faying, coolly, he hoped that I would now take the other alfo.

" His fmile and affurance pierced me more painfully than his fword could have done. I had contem-

plated

plated the poſſibility of my falling, but I had never once foreſeen the horror of having my life ſpared by ſuch a villain. I would at the moment ſooner have died, and I tried to provoke him to make uſe of his advantage by ſaying, that though the manner of his ſucceſs rendered it impoſſible for me to purſue my deſign, it could not prevent my thinking and ſpeaking of him as he deſerved. 'You are young and inexperienced,' ſaid he, 'but when you come to know the nature of women as well as I do, you will think leſs of events that are continually happening; I ſee, however that our friendſhip is at an end for the preſent, and ſo I wiſh you a good day.' Saying this, he threw the ſwords down on the

turf, and left me, wondering at the union of ſuch ſelf-poſſeſſion and villany, and curſing his diſſembled ſkill, which had thrown me into ſo mortifying a predicament.

"Thus compelled to relinquiſh my hoſtile deſign againſt this accompliſhed villain, I returned, mortified and wretched, to Devonſhire. The wound I had received, though not dangerous, became troubleſome from want of attention: the blood ſoon ceaſed to flow, and I thought no more of it, but, by the time I arrived at Exeter, it gave me conſiderable pain, and I ſtopped at Mr. Rundle's to have it examined and dreſſed. I candidly told him how I had received it, and he adviſed me to allow him to make

make it public. 'Your father,' ſaid he, 'will reprove you, I have no doubt, and the duel will probably be condemned by many of your friends, who reaſon juſtly on the practice of duelling; but it will not be difficult to make a diſtinction in your favour, and the happieſt and cleareſt inferences againſt the report ſpread by Mrs. Grimwood will be the reſult, as the abſurdity of your fighting in ſuch a caſe, were it true, is ſelf-evident, ſo that you will ſtand completely acquitted of the ſlanderous charge.'

"Convinced of the juſtneſs of this obſervation, I conſented that he ſhould mention it to my father, and take his opinion. 'It is a great

 pity,'

pity,' ſaid Rundle, 'that you failed to extirpate the villain whoſe exiſtence will but multiply ruin and wretchedneſs. Poor Mr. Nevill is diſtracted—' —'Good Heaven!' exclaimed I, 'does he know the fact?'—'It was impoſſible,' replied Rundle, 'to keep him ignorant of it; for, beſides the horror and diſtreſs that announced ſomething dreadful to be revealed, Miſs Nevill herſelf reſolved to make it known to him. In vain did her mother ſoothe and diſſuade her; ſhe ſaid that ſhe had a hope, confirmed by her ſenſations, that her crime had produced the inſtrument of her death, but that the torture of diſſimulation was not to be borne; that while ſhe fondly imagined a ſpeedy reparation, ſhe had,

had, from various motives, ſupported her anguiſh in ſilence; but now all hope of that had forſaken her, and ſhe would diſſemble no longer; ſhe could no longer endure it. When ſhe had thoroughly recovered her ſenſes, her countenance diſplayed ſuch a fixed and ſettled deſpair, that her mother was afraid to leave her, and as I called, on my return from Affington-Houſe, requeſted me to remain till Mr. Nevill came in.

'I will not attempt,' continued Rundle, 'to deſcribe to you the ſcene that took place. Ex-Mount, where ſo long order and happineſs had reigned, was all confuſion and miſery. Convinced that it would be a fruitleſs attempt to keep her

husband in ignorance, Mrs. Nevill undertook to disclose to him Montague's villany. I shall never forget his countenance, when after a considerable circumlocution, she awakened in his mind the idea of his daughter's ruin. When she only talked of his desertion of her, he said it had been too evident to surprise him; and thanked God that his Sophy had escaped so fickle a man: but when after requesting him affectionately to prepare his mind for a dreadful shock, she said that the villain had betrayed her innocence, he turned pale, and asked, with a quivering lip, what she meant. She answered him with tears. He swore it could not be; asked for his daughter, and in the same breath declared

he

he would never ſee her; curſed Montague, denounced his vengeance upon him, then ſaid again, it could not be, and demanded proof.

'In the midſt of his agitation Miſs Nevill's maid came to call Mrs. Nevill, who ran out of the parlour. Mr. Nevill had ſcarcely time to aſk me what I knew on the ſubject, when the girl returned for me: I could only beg him to be patient, and haſtened up ſtairs where I deprived his unhappy daughter of the inſtrument ſhe had relied upon for death.

'While I was attending her in her bed-chamber, her father's ſtep

was heard in the next room, whither Mrs. Nevill ran to ſtop him. Poor man! being alarmed by her information, he ſent her in again, and ſtanding concealed by the door, which he held ajar, called to his child in a gentle and plaintive voice, that beſpoke the agony of the conflict in his ſoul, 'Sophy, my dear Sophy, I love you very very dearly; live, I charge you live, and I will forgive you all. He then drew the door to ſoftly, and was heard no more. His gentle charge and fond promiſe of forgiveneſs had a different effect from what his ſolicitude intended. The ſound of his voice produced a tremour in my patient of which the conſequences at ſuch a time was to be dreaded. I was, however, fortunate enough, by the

the means of opiates, to give nature time to do her work, and I hope her life is not in danger; yet there is no anſwering, for it is wonderful how the vital functions are clogged and deranged by the working of ideas. She has not ſeen her father, nor does he now ſeem inclined to ſee her; for his mild ſolicitude was but the tranſient effect of her danger: with her ſafety his diſguſt and horror return. Her chief, indeed I may ſay all, her danger, depends on mental cauſes; for her conſtitution is good, and able to ſurmount the ſhocks it has ſuſtained, if imagination could be kept quiet.'

" Mr. Rundle having dreſſed my wound and promiſed to call on my father

father in the afternoon, I reſolved to defer my viſit to my friends near Chudleigh, and to go and ſtay at Ex-Mount till he had been at Affington. I had no hope of ſeeing Sophia, but I knew that both Mr. and Mrs. Nevill conſidered me as one of their family, and would no more exclude me from their ſorrows than from their joys. When I rang at the gate I was informed, that all the family, except Mrs. Nevill, and Sophia had left the houſe. I went in, at the ſame time deſiring that Mrs. Nevill might not be called to me, as I was at leiſure, and meant to ſtay. I was afraid leſt my being at Ex-Mount ſhould be mentioned in Sophia's hearing; but there was no occaſion for my apprehenſion, as ſhe

was kept dofing, and every precaution obferved.

"Mrs. Nevill, informed by Mary of my arrival, foon joined me. With tears fhe repeated what Rundle had told me, and added that Mr. Nevill was fo diftracted that he had not been able to refolve on the conduct to be purfued; that he had fent his other children to his fifter in Somerfetfhire, and had himfelf gone the evening before to Affington-Houfe, where he purpofed to take a bed for fome nights. I faid every thing I could to confole this amiable woman, who paffed the reft of the day between nurfing her daughter and converfing with me on the mifery entailed on our families by the

mif-

miſcreant with whom we were once ſo charmed.

“ In the evening Rundle came to Ex-Mount, after having been at Afſington, and informed me that my father had gone out early in the morning with Mr. Nevill, and was not expected back that night; that he had not ſcrupled to communicate to my mother my meeting with Montague, which had made her very uneaſy, and at the ſame time, very anxious to ſee me. He promiſed to pay me a viſit early next day, and I haſtened home.

“ My mother was not only hurt at the precipitancy with which I had acted, but the knowledge of it had

awakened in her mind a ſuſpicion that Mr. Nevill had induced my father to accompany him on a ſimilar deſign. A melancholy preſage encreaſed the gloom already ſpread through the houſe, and the whole of the next day was paſſed in great anxiety which, as the evening advanced, grew more and more painful, for my father had not ſaid that he ſhould be abſent more than one night. My mother at laſt became extremely agitated, and ſent me to Ex-Mount and to Exeter to make enquiries. I was afraid to raiſe the idea in the town, and Rundle, whom I conſulted, was of opinion that there were no grounds for my mother's fears, being confident, from my father's known principles, that

that he would not engage in a duel, or take any ſtep that ſhould countenance the practice. I was myſelf ſatisfied with this concluſion, and was about to return home, when it occurred to me that a letter might be lying at the Poſt-Office to be delivered in the morning. I was right in my conjecture, on applying I found a letter for my mother, but the poſt-mark ſhowing the route of the writer to be directly towards the point dreaded, my apprehenſions returned, and I heſitated whether to give it or not. I recollected, however, that though I had mentioned to my father where Montague was, my mother was not preſent at the time; I therefore delivered it, and had the ſatisfaction to find that it tranquil-

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lized her and Louiſa. It merely ſtated, that in the hope of alleviating the affliction of his friend he ſhould not quit him at preſent, and requeſted my mother not to be uneaſy if they did not return ſo ſoon as ſhe expected. I tried by my manner to confirm the ſecurity renewed by the letter, but to me the interval was awful between this and the next, which arrived a few days after, dated at Saliſbury. I have it in this collection, and you ſhall read it." Here Jones gave me the letter which was as follows:

'My dear Louiſa,

'From the ſituation of my friend Nevill, it will not be in my power to return to Affington for a week

week or ten days, or perhaps longer. I cannot, meanwhile, reconcile it to my mind to leave you ignorant of the real caufe of our abfence, however painful it is to acknowledge that I have acted contrary to my principles. Whenever man takes revenge into his own hands, inftead of repairing or diminifhing the injury he has received, he feldom fails to deepen and enlarge it. In vain did I argue with Nevill, to divert him from the refolution he had formed, of putting to death the villain who had robbed his life of all its relifh; the injury had fo inflamed his mind, and clouded his reafon, that he faw no medium between that and the ftill more horrid crime of fuicide. Happinefs, he faid, was out

of

of the queſtion; that was gone to return no more, but he could never be reſigned to life, he could never endure it, till he had uncaſed the demon of the fair form he had taken; or, at leaſt, till he had attempted it. In hopes of turning him from his purpoſe, and, at all events, believing I choſe the leſs evil, I conſented to accompany him in ſearch of Mr. Montague. Finding his reſolution unalterable, I reſolved to make ſolemn terms with Nevill. I might have prevented the duel, indeed, by application to a magiſtrate, but I ſhould probably by ſuch a ſtep have accelerated the alternative I dreaded; I therefore conſented to accompany him into the field on a ſacred promiſe that he would never attempt

his own life, or yield a ſecond time to the irrational impulſe that guided him to puniſh with his own hand. Montague was ſtill at Mr. Betteſworth's where John told me he was, and where I am ſorry to ſay I find that he lately ſaw him. John's conduct was raſh, and what I did not expect of him, nor ſhall I allow him to extenuate his by mine, for the motives and the caſes altogether are very different; but I ſhall reſerve what I have to ſay on the ſubject till I ſee him. At firſt Montague endeavoured to evade Nevill's challenge by ſending a perſon, whom he calls his friend, to *reaſon* with him. Nevill would not ſuffer him even to ſpeak, but laviſhed the moſt opprobrious terms on the man

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whoſe friend he profeſſed to be, adding that he was not ſurpriſed to find cowardice linked to villany. The young man, whoſe name, I have ſince learned, is Dorant, ſhrugged his ſhoulders and withdrew, ſaying, he undertook to ſhow that Mr. Montague was no coward. In leſs than an hour he returned commiſſioned to ſettle the time and place of meeting. He left every thing to Nevill himſelf but one point, and that was the place, which he thought ſhould be at a diſtance from Mr. Betteſworth's and mentioned a ſecluded ſpot near Saliſbury. To this, the diſtance being but eight miles farther, Nevill, though provoked at delaying his vengeance an inſtant, agreed, ſaying that he ſhould be there with a caſe of piſ-

tols in leſs than two hours, and hoped ere he ſlept to ſhoot the monſter. We immediately ordered the chaiſe, and drove to Saliſbury, where, leaving Nevill to engage apartments, I went in ſearch of my old acquaintance, Ruthven, whoſe ſkill as a ſurgeon I well knew. Having ſecured his attendance, I returned to my diſtracted friend, whom I accompanied to the place appointed. We had not waited long, when a chaiſe ſtopped at a little diſtance, and Dorant, leaving it, came up to us alone. He ſaid that Mr. Montague had more fully explained to him the cauſe of Mr. Nevill's challenge, and that, on reflection, he was reſolved not to meet him. 'Curſe the coward!' cried Nevill. Dorant entreated

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to be heard. Nevill, declaring with an oath that he would liſten to no palliative from ſuch an abandoned villain, referred the gentleman to me, and ſullenly walked away. Having attended to what Dorant had to ſay, which conſiſted merely in expreſſing his ſorrow for the reſult of what he called his friend's amour, and in ſtating the impoſſibility of his meeting the father of the lady, I inveighed bitterly againſt the conduct of the perſon he called his friend; to which he made no reply but by ſhrugs of the ſhoulders, and occaſionally repeating, 'that is according to circumſtances.' I was ſtill talking, when Dorant, obſerving the chaiſe go off at a very briſk rate, expreſſed his ſurpriſe. I looked round for Ne-

Nevill, but he was out of ſight. I aſked if Montague was in the carriage. He replied, no; but waiting for him at Saliſbury, which they meant to leave together, the inſtant he returned to the inn. I expreſſed an apprehenſion that Nevill was gone to find his enemy, and that ſome miſchief would publicly enſue; on which we walked, or rather ran, towards the town. I was right in my conjecture: we arrived too late. Nevill had told the poſtboy, who was ignorant of the intended meeting, that it was neceſſary he ſhould be in the town without delay; and had paid him beforehand for expedition. Concealing his piſtols, he deſired to be ſhown into the room where Montague was, and locking the

the door, on perceiving him, placed one of his piſtols upon a table, telling him that he would give him time to take it up, but that if he heſitated, he would ſhoot him without farther ceremony. Driven to this alternative, the villain took up the piſtol: they fired nearly at the ſame inſtant, and were both wounded. This I was told by Nevill, whom I found in the hands of Ruthven, who had removed him to our inn, which Montague had purpoſely avoided. The latter, being ſlightly hurt, has found means to eſcape; but our unfortunate friend is ſeriouſly, if not mortally, wounded. The ball ſtruck him on the outer part of the cheſt, towards the right ſhoulder, where it lodged, and has not yet been extracted.

He ſuffers much pain, and cannot be removed. Ruthven does not think his life in danger, but fears that it will not be poſſible to come at the ball; conſequently that the cure will never be perfect. Such is the reſult of duelling, in which the cauſe of juſtice and real honour is always liable to be ſacrificed; and by which injuries may be heightened, but can never be redreſſed. Poor Nevill, however, endures bodily pain with great patience; but he almoſt raves when he ſpeaks of the wretched man who has ruined his peace; and never mentions his daughter without tears. As an account of this affair will probably get into the public papers, I adviſe you, my dear Louiſa, to ſee Mrs. Nevill, and break the matter to

her as tenderly as poſſible. You may aſſure her, that her huſband is not in immediate danger, and ſay that I hope we ſhall be able, in a few days, to travel homeward. I beg you will yourſelf be perfectly eaſy as to our future conduct; for Nevill has aſſured me that he feels himſelf bound to a rigid obſervance of his promiſe, in return for the ſacrifice I made to him of my opinion to friendſhip. Remember me moſt affectionately to John and Louiſa. Tell John that the more I love him, the longer ſhall I be in recovering the ſhock I received on being told by Mr. Dorant that he had encountered Montague: not even the reflection that it is a full proof of his innocence of the crime laid to his charge can recon-

cile me to the thought of his having ſo far forgotten all my inſtructions on this head as to plunge *voluntarily* into a crime, which not even the mandates of the idol Honour can juſtify, however it may occaſionally be extenuated by circumſtances. Adieu!

'Yours moſt affectionately,

'J. J.'

"It is needleſs," ſaid Jones, reſuming his narrative, "to dwell circumſtantially on all the effects of Montague's villany; I ſhall briefly relate what occurred after this, and haſten to what more immediately concerns me at preſent. The contents of this letter, though they ſhocked, relieved my mother, and ſhe

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communicated them in ſuch a manner to Mrs. Nevill as to ſpare her much diſtreſs. My father and Mr. Nevill were abſent nearly a fortnight; during which I underſtood from Rundle, that Sophia made little progreſs towards recovery, and that he was obliged to keep her under the dominion of opiates.

"I went daily to Ex-Mount, where, inſtead of conſoling Mrs. Nevill, I wept with her. The houſe ſeemed deſerted: the children were gone with one of the maids to another county; the maſter of the houſe with his valet was abſent; the coachman, unemployed, ſauntered at the ſtable door; the other ſervants, ſcarcely ever called upon, ſat liſtleſs,

or working ſilently at their needle in the kitchen at a diſtance; Mrs. Nevill and Mary attended to Sophia; ſilence reigned throughout the houſe, the regular ticking of the clock in the hall was the loudeſt ſound to be heard. One morning when I called at the uſual hour, I was informed that Mrs. Nevill had a violent head-ach, and was lying down in her own room. After ſitting alone a conſiderable time in the parlour, reflecting on the great alteration in the appearance of Ex-Mount, and on the occurrences that had gradually led to it, I felt a deſire to ſee Mary, that I might inquire for Sophia and talk of her with that faithful girl. I did not like to ring the bell: I conceived the idea of ſtealing ſoftly up-

ftairs myfelf, and of drawing Mary from Sophia's chamber, by the gentle noife I fhould make as I moved in her ftudy.

"Treading with caution, I could not help ftopping on the broad ftaircafe to contemplate the awful filence of the place, contrafted with the accuftomed life and gaiety that conftantly delighted the eye and the ear, communicating fpirits to the happy inhabitants and all their vifitors: no domeftics were moving about, no children fkipping or dancing, no fprightly talk, no focial laugh was heard; no voice nor inftrument echoed through the manfion; all was mute and ftill—all ftruck dumb—Great God! all ftruck

dumb by a baſe, diabolical act of villany, to obtain a mean and tranſient gratification!

"With a full heart I went on to the little ſtudy—I turned the lock gently—Oh! how ſhall I tell it you! The tears that had riſen to my eyes on the ſtairs now ſtreamed down my cheeks—Conceive what my heart, prepared as it was, felt, when opening the door, I ſaw Sophia, lying at full length on a couch, pale, emaciated, her eyes cloſed, a bandage round her head, a quilt thrown lightly over her perſon. She appeared doſing; ſhe would have appeared dead, but that I heard her gently breathe. How ſlight was the ſenſation I felt on the ſtairs, compared to the agony

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I now endured. Mary was abſent. I ſtood motionleſs, my hands claſped, my tears flowing, gazing in a tranſport of grief on the injured angel. The features ſo much admired were before me, and they were ſtill lovely in their ruin; but where was the bloom of health, the firm and roſy cheek, the habitual ſmile indicating peace and innocence? Faded—gone —blaſted! Great God! blaſted by a villain for a mean and tranſient gratification! Heaven and earth! is it in the nature of man to ſacrifice virtue and lovelineſs to the depravity of his paſſions! to immolate angels at the ſhrine of brutality!

"While theſe reflections were riſing in my tortured mind, Sophia

opened her eyes. I ſtood unable to move. She looked at me for ſome time without ſeeming to perceive me. At laſt ſhe raiſed her head from the pillow, placed her hand to her forehead to ſcreen her eyes from the light, contracted them, and kept them ſtedfaſtly on me, attempting to aſcertain the reality of their perception; but, as if unable to ſucceed in the attempt, ſhe quietly ſhut her eyes again, and ſunk back to her former poſture. I remained gazing at her for ſeveral minutes: I was once going to ſpeak, but, perſuaded that ſhe was not in a ſtate to attend to me, and dreading the conſequence, I checked myſelf and reſolved to retire unobſerved. After I went out, I opened the door again, to look

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at her once more—alas! it was for the laſt time—I have never ſeen her ſince: ſhe lay in the ſame poſition. It was with the utmoſt difficulty I tore myſelf away, nor could I till with a fervency I never felt before, I had prayed that ſhe might be reſtored to health and tranquillity.

"I left the houſe unſeen, my heart ſinking under the weight of its affliction. Sophia was, if poſſible, more dear to me than ever. I did not reaſon like the world; I could not follow the judgment of my father. I ſaw her mind uncontaminated by guilt, though it had been influenced by terror: nay, the injury ſhe had received had been the means of ſetting her love of virtue

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in a ſtronger light in my eyes; for I had witneſſed the agitations of her ſoul, and had ſeen their deplorable effects upon her perſon. The ſtate in which I had juſt beheld her, produced new, though melancholy feelings, which, uniting with the paſſion ſhe had ſo early inſpired, rendered her even more intereſting to my heart than in her days of health, beauty, and uninjured innocence. Then, I could have reſigned her to the ſuperior proſpects fondly imagined by her father; but now, fallen, abuſed, fading in ſickneſs, the hand of death perhaps already upon her, I felt my heart cleave inſeparably to her, even to the wiſh of participating her grave. Oh, Morland! Morland! why are we thus form-

formed! why is the ſoul of man, in its pureſt moments, in its beſt affections, expoſed to the rack of ſenſibility?"

Jones ſpoke very warmly, and his queſtion was the effect of emotion: it required no anſwer but tears; a reply, which the picture he had drawn, anticipated. He felt a relief in my ſympathy, and continued his ſtory.

"When I called the next day," ſaid he, "and ſaw Mrs. Nevill, ſhe aſked me, if I had gone up ſtairs the day before. I loved her too much to have any reſerve with her; I owned I had, and I told her my motive, and the effect the unexpected

ed ſight of Sophia had on me. Sophia had told her that ſhe was certain I had been in the room, but that ſhe had not the power of utterance when ſhe ſaw me. Mary, at the time, was making the bed in her chamber.

"The manner in which Mrs. Nevill mentioned this circumſtance, and the affection with which ſhe ſpoke to me, impelled me to open my whole heart to her. I told her how I loved Sophia, declared that the injury ſhe had received made no change in my love or eſteem, and entreated her to aſſiſt me in accompliſhing my happineſs. 'My dear boy,' ſaid ſhe, 'you know not what you aſk. Had we never ſeen this wicked man who has

has overſet all our happineſs, nothing on earth could have added ſo much to it, as to have called you my ſon, to have ſeen you united to my girl; but very, very different are my feelings now. I love your father and mother too well to encourage you in ſuch a thought, and even if they conſented to your wiſh, I ſhould oppoſe it, for I love *you* too much to allow it.'—'Oh, my dear Mrs. Nevill,' cried I, 'Sophia is amiable, Sophia is virtuous.'—'Yes, John,' replied ſhe, 'my child *is* virtuous; I know every corner of her heart—' here tears choaked her utterance for a few moments, when ſhe added, —'and in the ſight of God, I would ſtake my life and all that is dear to me on her virtue; but ſhe is loſt to the world, and

and you, my dear John, ſhall marry no woman who is not reſpected and received.' I would have argued with her, but ſhe would not hear me, and compelled me to deſiſt, by ſaying, that at all events, the time demanded different thoughts.

"The day after I had this converſation with Mrs. Nevill, my father and Mr. Nevill returned. Though able to travel without danger from his wound, this afflicted father was by no means recovered: the ball had been found and extracted, but the malady of his mind, uniting with that of his body, had greatly altered his appearance. My father talked fully to me on the ſubject of duelling—I will not repeat his converſa-

verſation to you. It was impoſſible to refute his arguments: a crime it is, whether the reſult of a barbarous revenge, or of a weak apprehenſion of the ſcorn of the faſhionable world. He talked alſo of the wretched ſtate of Mr. Nevill's mind, but he ſtudiouſly avoided all converſation reſpecting Sophia, which ſurpriſed me, as I rather expected that he would ſay every thing to deter me from thinking of her. In a ſhort time, however, the motive of this ſilence was explained. While Mr. Nevill was detained by his wound at Saliſbury, he adviſed with my father on the conduct to be purſued with reſpect to his unhappy daughter, and they had agreed that it was impoſſible to let her reſide at Ex-Mount, or have any

any communication with her ſiſters. In conſequence of this deciſion, as ſoon as ſhe could be removed, Sophia was conveyed privately from her father's houſe, and the place of her baniſhment has been ever ſince kept a profound ſecret.

"We were informed of her removal, when it took place, by my father, who now expatiated on the neceſſity of ſeparating her from the family, and of ſecluding her from the world, particularly her former acquaintance, as the only chance ſhe had of recovering the ſlighteſt degree of tranquillity. He alſo ſeized the occaſion to repeat and enforce his opinion on the propriety of her

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remaining ſingle through life, as it was impoſſible that any man of nice feelings could, even for a moment, think of making her his wife. When I recovered from the ſhock given to my heart by the intelligence of the reſolutions reſpecting Sophia, I warmly proteſted againſt ſubmitting to the tyranny of the world: and ſaid that between the crime of killing a villain in a duel, and that of ſacrificing a virtuous woman who had been betrayed, and whoſe only error ſprang from an anxiety to retain the appearance as well as the reality of virtue, I ſaw no difference that was not in favour of the former, for they were both crimes upheld by falſe opinions of honour; that to make no diſtinction between vice and error was to

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confound the ideas of juſtice, and that I could not but hope Mr. Nevill would recall the cruel reſolution of baniſhing Sophia from his family before it completely broke her heart.

"My father, with a dejected countenance, ſaid he was ſorry to hear me expreſs ſuch ſentiments, for he could not call them arguments; that the opinion which ſanctioned duelling was pregnant with miſchief to ſociety, whereas the opinion reſpecting the honour of women was one of the ramparts that ſecured the happineſs of the worthier part of the community, and could not be too ſcrupulouſly ſupported, even though occaſionally attended with hard-

hardſhip, as in the preſent caſe; that as for the cruelty of ſeparating her from the family, it would be cruelty to the reſt, and to herſelf, not to do it; for how could ſhe hold up her head among them, or they look at her without the taint of recollection? That ſo far from being the means of breaking her heart, ſhe had herſelf eagerly ſeized the hint, as the only hope that could be preſented to her of its ever being healed ſufficiently to make her tolerate life —' and in this,' ſaid my father, ' ſhe diſplayed her accuſtomed good ſenſe, and I truſt ſhe will in time attain a ſerenity of mind that may, in the end combine with a more ſolid happineſs than is to be found in the good opinion of the world.' The praiſe

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this ſentence contained was ſoothing, and as I ſaw that I had given him pain, I reſolved to deſiſt oppoſing my opinion to his. I loved him better than myſelf, and I had long been convinced, by all his actions and expreſſions, that no object was dearer to him than my welfare and happineſs. This conſideration, with the eſteem and unbounded affection I bore him, wrought alſo in my mind a determination to endeavour to ſacrifice every wiſh of my own to gratify his.

" After ſome time the family were again aſſembled at Ex-Mount, all but Sophia; and every exertion was made to reſtore cheerfulneſs and gaiety, for the ſake of the younger children;

children; but the attempt was awkward, and long unſucceſsful, nor are the Nevills now what they were two years ago. Clara loved her ſiſter too well to be happy without her; ſhe was her friend: the two younger ones doted upon her; ſhe was their inſtructreſs and their play-fellow. Ex-Mount recovered its uſual round of company, and its uſual feſtivities, but not its uſual felicity: no wonder! its chief internal ſource of joy was ſtopped. Mrs. Nevill's formr habitual cheerfulneſs is poorly ſupplied by feigned gaiety, and Mr. Nevill conceals the brooding over his loſs under the veil of ill health, which ſerves him as an excuſe for the many ſolitary hours he ſpends in his ſtudy.

"It is now almoſt two years ſince the baniſhment of Sophia, and I have ſincerely combated my paſſion: alas! more ſincerely than ſucceſſfully. Far from avoiding company I have conſtantly ſought it: but it has ſerved more to confirm my admiration than to weaken my attachment; I find Sophia's equal nowhere. My father has even hinted a wiſh that Clara Nevill were his daughter. I always loved Clara, and ſtrove to form my heart to his wiſh; but I could do no more than love her as Sophia's ſiſter: that lively emotion which diſtinguiſhes the paſſion of love from the ſentiment of friendſhip, and with which I was ſo well acquainted, was wanting in my attachment to Clara, and in ſpite of

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my efforts always accompanied the idea of her fifter. It had accompanied her image in health and in ficknefs, in hope and in defpair, in the gaiety of confcious innocence, and in the horrors of violated virtue; in the hours of general admiration and in thofe of defertion. Can a paffion fuch as this be eradicated from the heart? It is in vain to try, Morland—my foul is wedded to her, and I would fooner make her my wife in the fad ftate in which I laft beheld her, than marry any other woman actually poffeffing health, beauty, and fortune.

" Such is the termination of my honeft endeavours to gratify my father: fuch is the fecret that is prey-

ing on my ſoul, and on which I am precluded from converſing with him, my mother, or my ſiſter, and which I have been doomed to confine to my own boſom; for as to a friend, ſuch a one as I wanted, let me repeat it to you, I ſought without finding. All the young men, whom I know, are conſtantly engaged in purſuing the common routine of pleaſures, and are as unſuited to the ſympathies of a wounded heart as to the comprehenſion of ſuch a love as mine. Something at my heart, Morland, tells me that Providence has thrown us together to ſoothe mutually the pains of our exiſtence. This may be deemed romantic; ſo are ſome virtues. It is true that we have had little trial of each other; but our ſitua-

ſituations, our ſentiments, are an earneſt of our ſincerity, and I am perſuaded that if I miſs this opportunity of forming ſuch a friendſhip as my imagination contemplates, I ſhall wait long before I find another."

My mind was completely open to the impreſſion of ſuch a confidence as Jones had repoſed in me; and the affecting manner in which he related his ſtory, had melted my heart to that ſoftneſs, which receives the deepeſt ſtamp, and at the ſame time fired it with that glow of virtue which renders the impreſſion indelible. We embraced each other like two fond ſchool-boys heedleſs of the

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diſtinctions of the world, and blind to events that were to overturn, on their quitting ſchool, all the ardent plans of youthful enthuſiaſm.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Strahan and Preſton.
Printers-Street,